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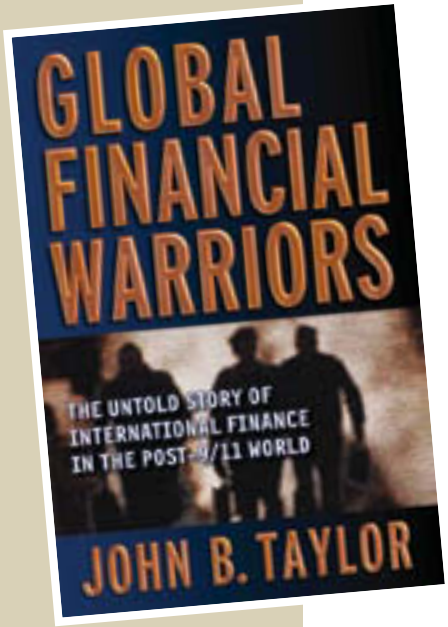

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John B. Taylor *was Treasury Under Secretary for international affairs from 2001 to 2005. A senior fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, he is also the Mary and Robert Raymond Professor of Economics at Stanford.*

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

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The Real Gerald Ford

In eulogy upon eulogy after his death December 26, President Gerald Ford was remembered as decent, down to earth, caring, self-effacing, and, especially, a wonderful parent. All true. But if that's all there were to Gerald Ford, one might conclude he was merely an unusually nice and modest man. He was much more than that. He was also tough, shrewd, sometimes calculating, ambitious, and combative.

Check the record. In 1948, Ford ousted an incumbent Republican congressman. In 1965, he challenged House Minority Leader Charles Halleck and took his job. In 1974, as an unelected president, he pardoned Richard Nixon. In 1976, he hammered Ronald Reagan in the Republican primaries as a man who couldn't start a war as governor of California but could if elected president.

Ford was no wimp—and that's the point. Even an accidental president doesn't get to the White House by decency alone. He has to have labored long and hard to be in a position to be selected. Ford had the makeup (though not always the policies) we want in a national leader. He was a combination of nice guy and skilled politician. America has produced many such leaders, but few more worthy than Ford.

Vice President Cheney put it as well as any of the multiple eulogists, in his remarks at the U.S. Capitol on December 30:

"Fifty-eight years ago, almost to the day, the new member from Michigan's 5th district moved into his office in the Cannon Building, and said his first hello to the congressman next door, John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts. They belonged to a generation that came early to great duties, and took up responsibilities readily, and shared a confidence in their country and its purposes in the world.

"In that 81st Congress were four future presidents, and others who wished for that destiny. For his part, Mr. Ford of Michigan aspired only to be speaker of the House, and by general agreement he would have made a fine one. Good judgment, fair dealing, and the manners of a gentleman go a long way around here, and these were the mark of Jerry Ford for a quarter century in the House." ♦

End of the Trip

Imagine The Scrapbook's dilemma when we ran across an Associated Press account last week about the blighted efforts to restore the late Ken (*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*) Kesey's psychedelic bus, which seems to be dissolving into the weeds somewhere in rural Oregon.

For those younger readers who don't know what we're talking about, here's the AP's description of this national treasure: "With a jug of LSD-laced juice in the refrigerator, clean-cut Kesey pals known as the Merry Pranksters on board and Neal Cassady, the driver in Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* at the wheel, the bus crossed the country from California to New York"—a journey made famous in Tom Wolfe's *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (1968).

As you might imagine, restoration efforts have not gone smoothly. To begin with, when he purchased a new bus 15 years ago, Kesey dumped the old one into a swamp—a storage venue not recommended by preservationists. A restaurant owner in Hollywood thought he had an understanding with the Kesey family to raise $100,000 to shine the 1939 International Harvester model until it sparkled; but they seem to have encountered creative differences—you know how that works in Hollywood—and now Kesey's daughter-in-law is reluctant to continue work until a documentary film deal can be worked out.

AP / Jeff Barnard

Kesey's bus

"I want to make sure we do this right and get involved with the right people," she told the AP. "This involves the memory of my father-in-law, and I take that very seriously. We just want to work with people with the same ideas about the bus as we do [sic]. We want to be sure it's on display for the most people possible."

Thus far, the bus has been hauled from the swamp, scrubbed a little, and Willie Nelson has kindly offered to install a new biodiesel engine. But that's about it. Alas, documentary filmmakers are not exactly besieging the Kesey homestead, and frankly, the whole project taxes The Scrapbook's customary support for historic preservation.

"This is an icon of America," one ex-Merry Prankster said to the AP. "It would be nice to see it back out on the

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road again to bring the reality of the '60s into the 21st century." In which case, in THE SCRAPBOOK's considered opinion, Willie Nelson should save his biodiesel money and help that Hollywood restaurant owner push this icon of America safely back into the swamp where it belongs. ♦

Adam Smith 101

THE SCRAPBOOK is delighted to recommend the latest, and by our reckoning most delightfully erudite, book from our wise, amusing, and prolific friend and contributing editor P.J. O'Rourke: *On the Wealth of Nations* (Atlantic Monthly, 256 pp., $21.95).

If the title sounds familiar, there's a reason: This is the first in a series of volumes from Atlantic Monthly Press about "Books That Changed the World," in which distinguished authors like P.J. devour classics "so you don't have to," and describe them, with wit and sagacity, for modern readers.

If there's anyone on the planet who can make Adam Smith as entertaining and informative as he was prophetic, it's P.J. O'Rourke; and we can truthfully report that the division of labor, the function of markets, mediums of exchange, and mercantilism have never been funnier—or more cogently explained—than here. ♦

A Metaphor Too Far?

Sad news from the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*: "Spaceship Earth," a 175-ton sculpture memorializing the late environmentalist David Brower, "has crashed to the ground. Barely three months after the $1 million sculpture was unveiled at Kennesaw State University, it collapsed in the middle of the night—all 175 tons—perhaps because of faulty glue," the paper reports.

Probably biodegradable glue. ♦

Calvin Cruce / AJC

'Spaceship Earth' before . . .

Andy Sharp / AJC

. . . and after

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Casual

The Good News Girl

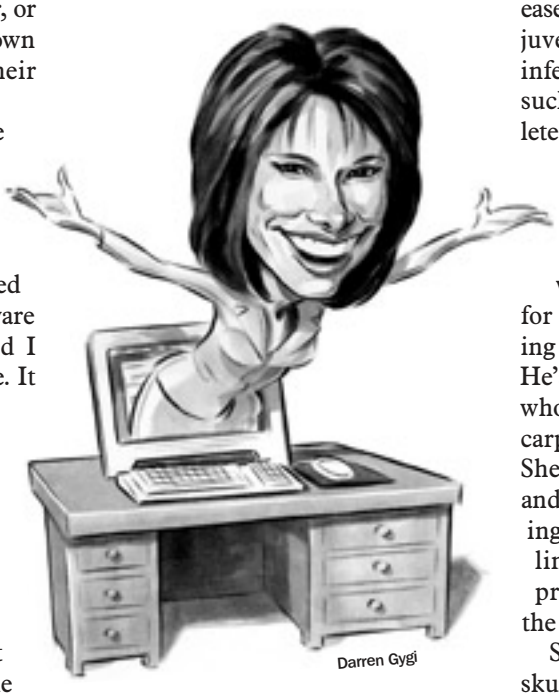
When I was a college twerp, surrounded by my college-twerp friends, we sat around like Gambino-family capos, deciding how to carve up the kingdom. They resolved to put their marketing majors to work in the captain-of-industry perches that were their birthrights, taking what was theirs as assistant popcorn-butter melters at the dollar theater, or salad-bar sneeze-guard cleaners down at Applebee's—at least until their screenplays sold.

Me, I decided to go where the news was, or at least where it could be manufactured, and became a journalist. Not because I thought a democracy flourishes only with a well-informed citizenry. Rather, I was keenly aware that most news is bad news, and I enjoy bringing bad news to people. It makes me feel alive.

As a tyke, I'd coax my toddler sister into throwing our dad's toiletries in the commode and flushing them, causing an overflow. Then I'd report back to our parents. It's not that I thought the undeserved spanking she'd receive was hilarious, though of course it was. I just enjoyed the theatrics, the tension, the story arc. I needed to have something urgent and dramatic to relate to the folks. But I was only six. Telling them we were running low on Capri Suns just didn't scratch that itch.

This character deficiency is shared by a large segment of our profession. Perhaps because of it, studies regularly show that in popularity contests, journalists' numbers hover around those of puppy poachers, al Qaeda cell leaders, and Republican congressmen. But it was only a matter of time before one of our own swam against the tide and struck a blow for decency. That somebody is Daryn Kagan, who has started the eponymous good-news website, *DarynKagan.com*.

Kagan was a CNN anchor before the suits decided to go in another direction since they already had a pretty face to attract male viewers (Anderson Cooper). But Kagan had had her fill of war, famine, and pestilence stories anyway. She now strives to accentuate the positive, celebrating the triumph of the human and animal spirit. On her webcasts, she sits casually on the floor in front of a roaring fire, announcing inspirational stories from categories with kindergarten-teacher-like names: "Today we are dipping into the Love Bucket," or the "End of the Rainbow Bucket." Her aim is to "show the world what's possible." She herself proved that anything is possible when the comely news reader let the galootish Rush Limbaugh date her in public (Gross Bucket).


Darren Gygi

There are all kinds of feel-good stories on *DarynKagan.com*. You can read about "Henry the Amazing 3-legged Cat" (Kagan has a three-legged cat of her own, which she says captures chipmunks and her heart), or "Ozzie the Hero Dog," the Airedale terrier who kept his owner from getting hit by a car, though Ozzie wasn't so lucky. Then there's the tale of a woman who was inspired by Oprah to show thanks for her good fortune by "paying it forward" and giving away her tea shop. When she took applications to see who the lucky winner would be, she got "tea-riffic responses!"

If you really want to be featured on *DarynKagan.com*, it helps to have cancer, though any incapacitating disease or malady will do: cerebral palsy, juvenile diabetes, even urinary tract infections. A typical title for a story, such as one on a very special triathlete: "No legs. No problem."

There's the 13-year-old who started the comic book series about Omega Boy and the evil Dr. Diabetes. Then there's the wheelchair-bound trumpet player for the Louisville Cardinals marching band who was born without eyes. He's not to be outdone by the woman who was hit in the head by a roll of carpet falling off an overhead rack. She didn't let her mild brain injury and fibromyalgia stop her from planting 10,000 lavender plants to start a line of aromatherapy and comfort products. She likes to say she had the "scents" knocked into her.

Sure, watching a man who had his skull crushed by doctors during childbirth paint with his nose is inspiring. But it's also a little depressing. After enough of these stories, I was yearning for a quick pick-me-up: a sex scandal, a natural disaster, genocide, anything.

Daryn does warn us that this isn't just happy news, it's "hopeful news." And it did leave me hopeful: hopeful that I don't contract Lou Gehrig's disease and find myself stenciling birdhouses with my eyelashes for the sake of injured chimney swifts, and finally ending up as fodder on *DarynKagan.com*.

Matt Labash

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Radios for Freedom

We at the Broadcasting Board of Governors welcome S. Enders Wimbush's "Radio Free Iran" (Dec. 18); however, we wish to correct several misperceptions.

First, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty is *not* the parent organization of Radio Farda, which is jointly operated by RFE/RL and the Voice of America (VOA). The BBG is the oversight body for all non-military international broadcasting.

Second, it seems contradictory for Wimbush to praise the history of U.S. international broadcasting while at the same time criticizing Radio Farda's use of music to draw listeners. This was the same strategy employed so successfully by the VOA with its use of music programs to attract audiences during the Cold War.

Third, Wimbush seems not to understand that, contrary to the days of the Cold War, today's target countries have rich media markets where the listener has many choices. The first objective of any programming must be to gain an audience. Lecturing Iranians on "what they have to understand" will drive away audiences.

By an intelligent mix of news and information plus entertainment programming, Radio Farda has become, in just four years, the most popular international radio broadcaster in Iran—13.5 percent weekly listenership, more than double second-place BBC. This success comes despite persistent jamming by Iranian authorities. Research indicates that listeners welcome Farda's format.

There is a good reason for orienting Radio Farda's format to Iran's youth: More than half of Iran's population is under 30 and more than 70 percent under 35. As recent student protests reported by Radio Farda show, it is vitally important that these young people have a source for accurate and objective news and information about their country and the world.

Radio Farda carries more than eight hours of news and information daily, more than any other Persian-language international broadcaster. The station will add another 30-minute daily news program by the end of the year.

Radio Farda also breaks format as dictated by news events, to carry live, extended coverage of events such as last week's domestic Iranian elections and U.S. presidential press conferences where Iran is discussed. Such programming is followed soon after by analysis and discussion.

Radio Farda also devotes significant programming to Iran's rich culture. In addition to carrying contemporary Persian music banned in Iran, the schedule is full of reviews of movies, books, and cultural and social events. We are constantly striving to improve our broadcasts and welcome constructive criticism and new ideas.

Edward E. Kaufman
Member, Broadcasting Board of Governors
Wilmington, Del.

S. Enders Wimbush responds: Edward E. Kaufman blurs a fundamental distinction between the VOA's public diplomacy and RFE/RL's strategic broadcasting. The latter, "surrogate" radios are less concerned with advocating for America than in spurring intelligent listeners to think about the costs to their nation of runaway ideologies. Congress has made it clear that it wants this distinction preserved.

Second, the weekly listenership Kaufman cites is irrelevant if it's the wrong audience, focused on music. Maximizing youth audiences with music should not be the decisive metric. The quality of the listeners and the critical positions of influence and authority they occupy are far more important. RFE/RL's original Radio Free Iran (Azadi) achieved a weekly audience of 6 percent with serious fare in only four years before it was morphed into Radio Farda. With the resources made available to Farda, that number would have continued to increase among Iran's agents of change.

Third, Iran is awash in "news and information" from all over the world, all of it purporting to be "accurate." Thus, Farda's niche should be intelligent debate from many sources about what the news means in addition to discussion of historical context and an accounting of the costs of missing globalization. Farda has never occupied this niche.

Fourth, lecturing audiences on "what they have to understand" was never part of RFE/RL's strategy, which is precisely why they were so effective and credible. It is worrisome that the BBG might actually think that this is what RFE/RL did during the Cold War. While stressing balance and credibility, the radios have never been neutral: They were created to shape political landscapes.

When my article appeared, my inbox overflowed with emails from Iranians crying out for changing Farda fundamentally. A reappraisal of U.S. international broadcasting strategy, to Iran and elsewhere, is overdue.

• • •

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On hand from our staff will be Bill Kristol (editor), Fred Barnes (executive editor), Terry Eastland (publisher), Philip Terzian (books & arts editor), and Jonathan Last (online editor). Joining us will be special guests Michael J. Gerson, President Bush's chief speechwriter from 2001 to 2005, and Frederick W. Kagan, military historian and resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, and author of *Finding the Target: The Transformation of American Military Policy.*

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Playing Offense

You may have noticed from this week's festivities that the Democrats now control both houses of Congress. Bush administration officials certainly have. Their minds have been concentrated by the prospect of congressional Democrats holding hearings on just about everything—but especially on Iraq, and beginning right away.

Administration officials are undoubtedly dreading the prospect of testifying, if only because time spent preparing and hours consumed by testimony will make it harder for them to do their jobs. But these hearings could have a real benefit. If the administration handles them properly, they can clarify for the American public the stark choice we face in Iraq: between a policy of withdrawal and defeat, and a policy aimed at success and victory.

True, congressional critics will want to spend much time looking back at failures in the administration's Iraq policy. That is legitimate, and administration officials should frankly acknowledge the errors committed since the beginning of the occupation. Not least of those errors was the decision to commit far too few troops to bring stability and security to Iraq after Saddam was toppled.

But the real policy question—what matters now—is how to correct those errors and move forward. This week the president will set forth his proposal. We hope and expect it will include a clear articulation of a new strategy for Iraq—a real effort, based on classic counterinsurgency doctrine, to secure the Iraqi population, first in Baghdad, and then in Anbar, along with substantial aid for economic development and jobs for Iraqis. This will be supported by a rapid increase in the size of the force in Iraq by around 30,000 troops, and will signal a sharp departure from the failed Rumsfeld-Abizaid-Casey minimalist approach.

Once the president has set forth his strategy, administration officials will go to Capitol Hill, where they will need to explain and defend it. They will need to be prepared for the many hostile questions that will be posed by congressional critics, including by those hoping to use these hearings to catapult themselves toward the presidency in 2008.

But the administration witnesses need to do more than defend the president's proposal. These hearings are also an opportunity to go on offense: to point out that the choice in Iraq is not between the president's proposal and some other, more perfect plan. As the Baker commission amply demonstrated, there are no other brilliant ideas out there about how to achieve an acceptable outcome in Iraq. The only real alternative to what the administration is proposing is some form of withdrawal—and defeat.

The task in these hearings, then, is not just to explain and defend the president's plan, but to make the point that it is better than any plausible alternative, especially withdrawal. Committee members should not be allowed to get away with simply criticizing the president's plan. They must also explain what they would propose instead.

And if what they propose is withdrawal, then they must be asked to explain how that would work. And they should be asked to answer a few basic questions about how they would deal with the consequences of withdrawal. How would they respond to the eruption of full-blown civil war in Iraq and the massive ethnic cleansing it would produce? How would they respond to the intervention of Iraq's neighbors, including Iran, Syria, and Turkey? And most important, what would they propose to do if, as a result of our withdrawal and the collapse of Iraq, al Qaeda and other terrorist groups managed to establish a safe haven from which to launch attacks against the United States and its allies? Would they favor another invasion of Iraq to root out these terrorist bases? Or would they tolerate the establishment of another terror base, bigger and better funded than the one that developed in Afghanistan?

Although congressional committees prefer asking questions to answering them, these hearings should not be the usual one-sided affair, where senators read prepared questions and administration officials politely read prepared responses. Administration officials can't let themselves simply play defense. They need to frame the alternatives—and insist on an open and searching dialogue about what to do next, about what can work and what can't, and about the consequences of whatever course we take. The result of such a dialogue will be to present the American people with a real discussion of the risks and the possibilities of all the options—exactly what the Baker commission with its closed-door meetings and artificial consensus did not provide.

We are confident that when the choices are clearly and honestly posed, and the arguments coherently and forcefully made, the majority of Americans will reject withdrawal and defeat and support the president's efforts to achieve success and victory in Iraq.

—Robert Kagan and William Kristol

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They Legislate, We Decide

The view from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

BY FRED BARNES

You can't govern from Capitol Hill. Newt Gingrich, as Republican House speaker, tried after the landslide of 1994 and failed. Yet Democrats, with their "100 hours" agenda in the House and 10 legislative "priorities" in the Senate, act as if they can run Washington. House speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate majority leader Harry Reid are promising to take the country in a "new direction." Good luck.

What stands in their way? Three rather large impediments. One, the Democratic majority in the Senate is fragile (51-49), and it's hardly overwhelming in the House (233-202). Second, Democrats are fractured on many issues—not just Iraq but even on whether to pursue a moderate strategy of moving slowly and carefully or one of going for broke to roll back the conservative advances of the Bush years. And third, there's Bush and his weapons.

The president has quite an arsenal: veto, filibuster by Senate Republicans, bully pulpit, a potential alliance of Republicans and conservative Democrats on selected issues, recess appointments, discretion to act on foreign policy without congressional approval. In a political fight, Congress can't match a president's tools.

And Bush is prepared to use them. His strategy is to join with Democrats on issues on which they agree—extension of No Child Left Behind, comprehensive immigration reform, and stepped-up funding for alternative energy—and strongly oppose everything else that Democrats are proposing. This amounts to limited bipartisanship—very limited.

Bush, according to aides, feels "liberated" to insist on fiscal restraint. He was more or less obligated—or at least felt he was—to sign spending bills passed by a Republican Congress. But with a Democratic Congress, "he can be bolder than he otherwise might have been," an aide says. That means a willingness—perhaps an eagerness—to use the veto. In his first six years as president, Bush often threatened vetoes but vetoed only a single measure.

To the delight of the White House, Democrats have endorsed the same fiscal goal as the president: a balanced budget by 2012. But Bush and Democrats are sure to disagree on how to achieve it. The White House wants to hold down spending but not raise taxes. Bush advisers assume Democrats will prefer higher spending plus tax increases. And they're convinced the politics of the two plans favors Republicans. "I want the Democrats saying higher taxes," an aide says.

This approach is a bit of a gamble. Democrats believe raising taxes on the well-to-do to pay for, say, expanded health care benefits for children is a political winner. It might be. But when Bush adviser Karl Rove spoke to Grover Norquist's weekly gathering of conservatives last week in Washington, he offered to bet anyone in the room $5 that the president would finish his two terms without having signed a single tax hike. Rove had only one taker.

If Rove is right—and I believe he is—Social Security reform is off the table in Bush's final two years. Democrats look kindly on a fiscal fix for Social Security that involves raising the ceiling on income subject to payroll taxation. But they won't offer Bush what he might want—personal investment accounts—in exchange for swallowing a tax increase. "He's not going to raise taxes for nothing," an adviser says.

Pelosi and Bush in the Oval Office

Reuters Photo Archive / Kevin Lamarque

Bush, of course, has opposed tax increases throughout his presidency. Last week, in a piece published in the *Wall Street Journal*, he wrote that "now is not the time to raise taxes on the American people." Still there have been fears he was weakening on taxes after the election disaster last November. Not so, his aides say. His no-new-taxes policy is unwavering and all-encompassing.

Even before Democrats took over Congress last week, the White House was developing tactics to block their agenda. One of the six items on the "100 hours" program in the House is expanded funding of embryonic stem cell research. It's likely to pass Congress, prompting a Bush veto that the House is all but certain to sustain. The president is also expected to disclose new breakthroughs from non-embryonic stem cell research.

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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Bush is braced to accept a boost in the federal minimum wage from $5.15 to $7.25 an hour, but not unless it is coupled with tax relief for small businesses. Some Democrats and organized labor oppose the so-called offsets. Siding with Bush, Senate Republicans may mount a filibuster to block a simple increase.

One way or another, Bush and his aides figure they'll defeat the Democratic bid to have the federal government negotiate drug prices for the popular Medicare prescription drug program. The bill may not pass. If it does, Bush is ready to veto it—in the expectation his veto will be easily upheld.

Then there's the item to cut the interest rate on student loans in half. Democrats have already discovered this would cost far more than initially anticipated. Its future is unclear after Democrats concluded it might have to be phased in over five years.

Democrats are not powerless. They can make life in Washington unpleasant for the Bush administration. They can turn oversight hearings into partisan show trials. They can bombard the administration with subpoenas. They can leak what they find to the press. They can recommend Bush appointees for criminal prosecution.

But they cannot stop the president from deploying more troops in Iraq to secure Baghdad, as he is expected to do soon. And while they can reject confirmation of Bush's nominees for United Nations ambassador, director of national intelligence, and deputy secretary of state, Bush can respond with recess appointments. The Democrats' ultimate weapon is a cutoff of funds for Iraq, but they have said they won't use this weapon, for now anyway.

One might suppose the White House would be chastened, given Bush's dismal public approval rating. Bush and his aides aren't. Instead, they're amused by Democratic pretensions of being in charge of Washington. "It's just hilarious," an aide says. "They've got to legislate. We govern. We run things." Presidents, even unpopular ones, usually do. ♦

Ethiopia versus the Islamists

What the U.S. military has been up to in the Horn of Africa. BY VANCE SERCHUK

After holding Mogadishu for six months, Somalia's Islamists have been swept from power, ousted in a blitzkrieg attack by the Ethiopian military. The nature of the emerging political order in Somalia remains profoundly uncertain, with the retreating Islamists threatening to wage an Iraq-style insurgency, and the internationally recognized Somali government facing doubts about its popular legitimacy, internal cohesion, and ability to ensure even basic security. Still, the battlefield gains of the past two weeks have created a rare window of opportunity in this long-suffering corner of the Horn of Africa, as well as in the broader war on terror.

The rout of the Islamists also represents a surprising success for the Bush administration, whose Somalia policy seemed hopelessly mired in interagency acrimony just a few months ago. Following the defeat of a coalition of CIA-backed "secular" warlords by the Islamists earlier this year, angry accusations flew from the State Department about Langley's botched efforts, which seemed to have helped consolidate the very threat they were intended to preempt.

Yet ultimately, it was the behavior of the Islamists themselves, once established in power, that spurred key officials at Foggy Bottom to embrace a new, more aggressive set of policies. Prisoners to their ideology, the hardliners in Mogadishu failed to take the pragmatic steps that could have led to a rapprochement with the United States and allowed them to outflank the hapless "official" Somali government. Instead, the Islamists continued to shelter several known al Qaeda operatives, while welcoming other foreign jihadists into their ranks.

Thus the longstanding Somalia problem came to metastasize over the past six months. No longer just a failed state that could be occasionally exploited by terrorists, it was turning into something more threatening: an active and steadfast ally of the global jihadist movement. In the face of this new and deepening danger, the State Department, it seems, tacitly decided it was time to give war a chance.

Equally important as Foggy Bottom's willingness to accept Ethiopian military intervention, however, was the capacity of Addis Ababa's armed forces to execute it effectively. In this regard, the swift rollback of the Islamists also offers something of a vindication of the Pentagon's long-term strategy in the Horn of Africa, and its investments there.

The lead actor in this case has been Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa, or CJTF-HOA. Headquartered at Camp Lemonier in Djibouti—a sweltering speck of a country wedged at the intersection of Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, and the Gulf of Aden—the U.S. military presence does not look like much: a rough and tumble collection of air-conditioned tents, prefab trailers, and plywood shacks, perched between the scruffy Djiboutian capital and a volcanic desert. A French colony until 1977, Djibouti remains home to Paris's largest overseas military contingent. Foreign Legionnaires jog on the perimeter of the U.S. compound, while Mirage fighter jets fly overhead. (U.S. troops note their neighbors have

Vance Serchuk, a research fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, traveled in Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya last summer.

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a special fondness for buzzing low over Camp Lemonier early on Sunday mornings.)

CJTF-HOA—which constitutes the U.S. military's first post-9/11 outpost in sub-Saharan Africa—has been at the epicenter of an ambitious effort by the Pentagon to bulk up the capabilities of indigenous militaries in the region. The task force provides training and equipment to key allies such as Ethiopia. CJTF-HOA has also been working extensively with the Ugandan army, which has announced it will contribute troops to the peacekeeping force being planned for Somalia. Although officials at Camp Lemonier insist they are not in the business of recreating the King's African Rifles or other such native levies, the task force's activities fit squarely with what last year's Quadrennial Defense Review described as a "shifting emphasis" toward the use of "surrogates" in the war on terror.

Civil affairs is another focus of the task force. In December alone, CJTF-HOA troops airlifted food to flood victims in Ethiopia, treated livestock in Kenya, and refurbished an orphanage in Djibouti. The working assumption is that a recurring U.S. military presence in these areas makes it harder for extremists to operate openly in them, and that even modest outlays of aid can help win public support. Also, when it comes to gathering detailed information about these collapsed corners of the developing world, there's no substitute for being on the ground.

The flood relief activities in eastern Ethiopia, for example, may have helped provide a screen for the U.S. military to conduct reconnaissance activities on the Islamists just across the border in Somalia. The Kenyan veterinarian program, meanwhile, took place in the Lamu archipelago, an island chain just south of Somalia that has been used in the past as a transit point by Islamic radicals moving along the Swahili coast. When one plots the U.S. military's civil affairs presence on a map of the Horn, it is no coincidence that they follow a rough arc along the Somali border and other trouble spots that the United States has an interest in keeping an eye on.

Ironically, these sorts of missions were not what the Pentagon had in mind for CJTF-HOA when it was created in 2002. At that time, the concern was that large numbers of foreign jihadists would flock to the Horn of Africa from Afghanistan and the Middle East, drawn by its porous borders, weak governments, and large Muslim populations—and that the U.S. military needed to be ready to take direct action against them.

EPA / Corbis / Ibrahim Elmi

Ethiopian soldiers in Somalia, January 1, 2007

This was not an unreasonable calculus. Although Americans tend to think of Africa as a continent apart from the rest of the Muslim world, this division is more imagined than real. Shared waters bind together Arabia, South Asia, and the Horn. At the chokepoint where the Gulf of Aden meets the Red Sea, it's only an hour's ride on a speedboat between Djibouti and Yemen.

But not until the seizure of Mogadishu by the Islamists last year did the large-scale terrorist infrastructure that Pentagon planners had feared materialize. In the meantime, CJTF-HOA began emphasizing military training and civil affairs as a new justification for its existence. Not that Camp Lemonier was without its uses: For one thing, it provided a platform for unconventional operations against specific targets—most famously, the CIA's use of a Predator drone to assassinate al Qaeda operative Qaed Salim Sinan al-Harethi in November 2002.

Regardless of its rationale, the reinvented task force has won some influential supporters, including retiring CENTCOM commander General John Abizaid, under whose authority the Horn of Africa falls. Abizaid has described CJTF-HOA as a "blueprint" for the future. "Dollar for dollar and person for person, our return on our investment out here is better than it is anywhere in the CENTCOM [area of responsibility]," he commented.

The task force has fewer than 2,000 U.S. troops, an economy of force that advocates like Abizaid argue keeps the U.S. military under the radar and prevents it from stirring up local or global resentments. In Somalia, this strategy seems to have worked: The U.S. military has provided training and support for the Ethiopian military, and it furnished Addis Ababa with intelligence before and during the invasion of Mogadishu, but the details of the Pentagon's involvement passed largely unnoticed in the media.

This presents more reasons the use of the Ethiopians in Somalia was so appealing. U.S. land forces and political will had been tapped out by Iraq and Afghanistan. Additionally, any U.S. involvement in the Horn of Africa would stir up memories of "Black Hawk down." Military operations by Ethiopia, by contrast, aren't liable to provoke the kind of international outrage or diplomatic dislocations that a U.S. attack would elicit.

That's not to say there aren't still

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risks. If the invasion turns into a quagmire, the media—not to mention our African partners—are sure to start placing quite a bit more emphasis on the Bush administration's role (as happened after the collapse of the CIA-supported warlord coalition earlier this year). Relying on proxies may afford greater freedom of action initially, but spectacular failure is still likely to boomerang back onto Washington.

And even when the media are looking the other way, our enemies are not. Ayman al-Zawahiri, al Qaeda's number two, has already issued a recording calling Somalia "one of the crusader battlefields that are being launched by America . . . against Islam," a message that will no doubt resonate in the Muslim world.

The use of proxy forces involves other, more fundamental, risks—foremost, a lack of control over agents, often when it matters most. The United States can offer an impressive range of inducements to make the Ethiopians do what they otherwise might not desire to do, but they retain control over their army in Somalia. They decide where they will deploy, whom they will empower, when they will leave, and how they will behave while there. As the United States should have discovered at Tora Bora in 2001 and in Baghdad in 2005, this reliance can create dangers that should at least caution against any surfeit of confidence in our allies.

Alas, the United States has a recurring habit of allowing its strategic thinking to get clouded, if not wholly captured, by its client states—seeing its allies as it wishes them to be, and not as they are. This problem is sharply reflected in CJTF-HOA's civil affairs projects, which soldiers dutifully insist are intended to support the host government in whose territory they are undertaken. This line may make a certain amount of sense in Iraq or Afghanistan—where the U.S. intervention stands or falls with the national leadership we have helped install—but in many parts of Africa, the appeal of U.S. aid stems directly from the deliberate neglect and disregard of the regime for its people. This suggests the need for a more nuanced approach in these places, in which the United States would achieve its maximum advantage only by adroitly navigating among national leaders, local elites, and the general public.

This, of course, requires detailed local knowledge, individual contacts, and a long institutional memory—none of which CJTF-HOA is designed to possess. Rather than designating a particular group of units to rotate through the Horn of Africa—thus allowing a body of soldiers to grow familiar with its languages, cultures, politics, and personalities—CJTF-HOA has often ended up with who-

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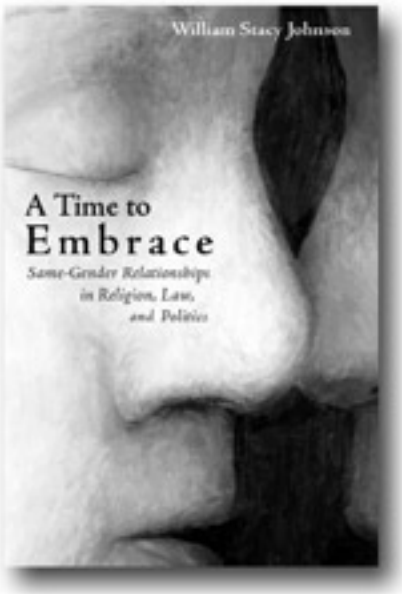

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ever wasn't bound for Iraq or Afghanistan. Despite Abizaid's praise, the task force does not appear to be a Pentagon priority. Until recently, in fact, "it was four years' worth of six-month or one-year rotations," one military official in Djibouti told me, frustrated. "There was no institutional memory."

Any solution to these institutional problems will, of course, come too late for the opportunity now presented in Somalia. What's required there, and immediately, is a military force that can restore order to Mogadishu. While many Somalis seem genuinely relieved to be rid of the Islamists and their prohibitions against foreign music and movies, the return of warlords, militias, and rampant banditry to the capital city must be confronted at once. As one resident told the *Washington Post*, "Now has come a problem bigger than not being able to watch a film. Now, you could lose your life."

Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer has been in Addis Ababa this past week, helping to lead diplomatic efforts to cobble together the 8,000-strong African peacekeeping force to follow the Ethiopians into Somalia, as endorsed by the U.N. Security Council. The Bush administration has also deployed ships on the Somali coast to block the escape of jihadists and has pledged $40 million to aid the reconstruction of the government. Until peacekeepers arrive, the United States should press the Ethiopians to provide elementary security—despite concerns that their presence might stoke Somali nationalism. It should also be ready to lend additional military assets to the peacekeeping effort—in particular, airlift, intelligence sharing, basic supplies, as well as the humanitarian resources of CJTF-HOA.

It is far too soon to judge whether any combination of diplomacy and resources will produce anything that resembles success in Somalia. But while there is no room for complacency, there may be—for the first time, in a long time—a slim cause for hope in this long-suffering country. ♦

Thus All Too Seldom to Tyrants

Saddam's punishment was a rare instance of just deserts. BY DAVID GELERNTER

"Rejoice not when thy enemy falleth"—that is the Bible's advice (Proverbs 24:17), and the classical rabbinic tradition cites this verse in urging us never to celebrate the death of an enemy no matter how evil. But Americans have plenty to celebrate in the trial and punishment of Saddam Hussein by his own nation, which America and her allies made possible. The trial of Saddam was a triumph for one of the noblest of all causes: the sanctity of justice no matter how powerful the criminal, no matter how poor or powerless the victim. May the same thing happen to terrorist tyrants everywhere. But it isn't likely to. For a nation to pass sentence on its own deposed dictator is a rare event.

In the days following Saddam's execution we heard often about how the Iraqis (and by implication their American protectors) had botched it. Saddam was taunted on the gallows, and his last moments were videotaped by witnesses who should not have been collecting souvenirs. Those infractions of execution etiquette ought not to have been allowed, but don't kid yourself: No execution is ever pretty. And in this squeamish, fastidious nation it is easy to forget the significance of a hanging; a British royal commission once spelled it out. Hanging is "a peculiarly grim and derogatory form of execution, suitable for sordid criminals and crimes."

In any case, those who criticize the manner of Saddam's execution invite the world to contemplate the ways in which the convict himself did the deed. How much dignity did his thug henchmen allow Iraqis who were about to be fed into industrial shredders or to have nails driven into their skulls? "Execution with dignity" is virtually a contradiction in terms, but many believe that a noose and a swift broken neck were too good for a man who had murdered so many and created so much misery and agony in this sad, suffering world.

All things considered, the trial of Saddam Hussein was a moral bull's-eye in a field where bull's-eyes are rare. The last hundred years have seen many of the most vicious murderers the world has ever known. Some were tried; plenty were not.

The bestial cruelty with which the Japanese army treated captive soldiers and whole Asian peoples in World War II will be a reproach to Japan forever. Some of the foulest, highest-ranked criminals were tried at the Tokyo war crimes trial. Eleven nations, Western and Asian, sent judges. Sixteen defendants were sentenced to life, seven to death. And countless small-fry torturers, gang rapists, and cold-blooded murderers were never tried at all.

After the war, the French tried Philippe Pétain and Pierre Laval, chief authors of the pro-Nazi Vichy regime. Both were sentenced to death. (Pétain's sentence was commuted on account of age, and he died in prison.)

But the fates of leading Nazi gangsters were a mixed bag. Some were tried at Nuremberg. Some were executed. But Himmler committed suicide before he was tried, Goebbels and Hitler himself before they were even captured.

David Gelernter is a national fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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A concerted, high-priority effort might perhaps have taken Hitler alive in the last weeks of the war, as Berlin disintegrated. But it never happened. And we'll never know how much this failure has cost. Mankind may never have another chance to put the devil himself in the dock.

Stalin was a mass murderer on Hitler's own scale. He never ran the smallest risk of facing trial and died (in 1953) in his bed. His totalitarian grip on the Soviet Empire made it impossible for his terrorized people to rise against him. Once again we will never know the cost to mankind of this failure of justice. That communism means Stalin as surely as Nazism means Hitler is a fact that (evidently) many people do not know; meanwhile, Russia coasts downhill towards a resurrected pseudo-Communist dictatorship.

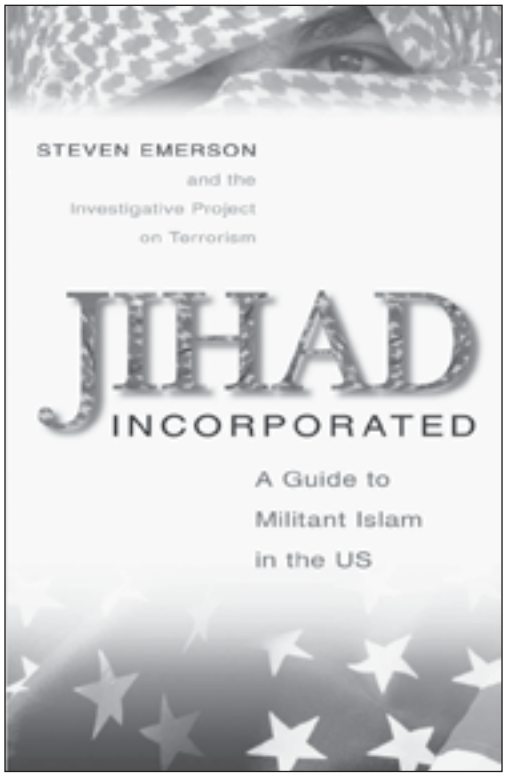
Mao died in his bed. Castro is on his way. Pol Pot of the Khmer Rouge, who slaughtered perhaps three million Cambodians, died in the Cambodian jungle in 1998—admittedly under house arrest, but held by his own Khmer Rouge, not any national or international authority. Idi Amin, butcher of Uganda, died four years ago in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The mass-murderer Radovan Karadzic has evaded capture and is apparently a hero to (at least some) Bosnian Serbs.

Justice wins occasionally. Slobodan Milosevic died last year in his cell during his long-running trial by international tribunal for mass murder in the former Yugoslavia. The Greek colonels who ran a brutal regime during the late 1960s and early '70s were brought to trial after democracy was restored; Georgios Papadopoulos, the most prominent, died of cancer in prison.

Today's Europeans seem enthusiastic about war crimes trials. But they see themselves as the only trustworthy judges. Britain was unwilling to leave Augusto Pinochet to the justice of his own Chilean nation. During a 1998 trip to London, the Chilean ex-dictator (who ran a brutal regime that also—inconveniently—turned the nation's economy around and made it the strongest and freest in South America) was placed under house arrest, on the orders of a Spanish judge. He was freed in 2000 after being pronounced too ill to stand trial. (He has since died.) Belgium defined the height of arrogance for all time in 2001, when the Belgian Prosecutor's Office tried to indict Israel's prime minister, Ariel Sharon, for war crimes. Anyone with half a brain is aware that no nation in the world is more self-critical—more apt to investigate its own crimes and try its own actual criminals—than Israel, except for the United States. The idea of Europe sitting in moral judgment on Israel would be funny, except that no joke can be amusing forever—and this one has been done to death. Perhaps Europe would consider composing a new joke.

What do we gain in the end by trying a broken, humiliated dictator and then putting him to death or locking him away?

We comfort the survivors and the



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Exceptional American

Seymour Martin Lipset, 1922-2006.

BY MICHAEL BARONE

To understand a nation's character, it seems to help to be a foreigner: Who has understood the American character better than the French aristocrat Alexis de Tocqueville? Seymour Martin Lipset, who died on December 31, was not a foreigner or even, quite, an immigrant: He was born a year after his parents immigrated from Russia, in the few years after World War I and before restrictive immigration laws went into effect. Born in Harlem, raised in the Bronx, he attended City College of New York—a background, he once noted, that he shared with Colin Powell, except that Powell joined ROTC and Lipset joined the Trotskyite Young People's Socialist League. His parents wanted him to become a dentist, but he was interested in other things—like why the rest of America was not as favorable to socialism as so many of his peers at CCNY.

He started off by looking at exceptions to the American—or, rather, North American—rule. His doctoral thesis and his first book, published in 1950, was *Agrarian Socialism*, on the Social Credit movement in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan. Through a long career, he kept an eye on Canada, as an interesting test case of a former British colony that has taken a different course; he contrasted the United States and Canada in *Continental Divide* in 1990. Another early subject was *Union Democracy*, a study of the International Typographical Union. At Columbia, Berkeley, Harvard, Stanford, George Mason, the Hoover Institution, the Woodrow Wilson Center, the Progressive Policy Institute, and the American Enterprise Institute, he straddled the disciplines of political science and sociology; he was the only person to head both the American Political Science and American Sociological associations.

In 1960, he published the classic *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*, which became a standard text and sold 400,000 copies. Three years later came *The First New Nation*, an analysis of the uniqueness of America. Later books covered student politics, right-wing extremism, the politics of professors, public confidence (or lack of it) in institutions, and the place of Jews in American life. Altogether he wrote or coauthored 21 books, edited 25 books, and wrote hundreds of scholarly articles. His work was cited more often than that of any other contemporary political scientist or sociologist; type his name in *Amazon.com* and you come up with 3,105 entries.

Marty Lipset was a formidable scholar, developing new ways of quantifying behavior, but he was far from unapproachable. He was generous in training hundreds of graduate students and encouraging them to publish their work. In conversation and interviews he showed a sure command of scholarly articles on every subject even remotely relevant to his work and rattled off statistics with aplomb. He was a tall, imposing man, with a gentle demeanor and more than occasional flashes of humor.

Lipset's life work, said historian John Patrick Diggins, was to "explain America to itself"—he was Tocqueville's heir. And to explain our many particularities and peculiarities: why, as journalist Martin Walker put it, Americans exhibit almost Iranian levels of religiosity, and why they hate turning out to vote but enjoy joining voluntary associations. He appreciated the role of religion in shaping the national character. "The United States is the only Protestant sectarian country in the world," he told an interviewer in 2000, "and Protestant sectarians are very moralistic and believe

Michael Barone is a senior writer at U.S. News & World Report, *coauthor of* The Almanac of American Politics, *and author of* Our Country: The Shaping of America from Roosevelt to Reagan.

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that one should do what's right, not what other people want." But he didn't see America through rose-colored glasses. He noted that treaties with Indians were routinely broken, "not by the government but by local settlers," and—with a glance northward—that after Custer's defeat, "the Sioux, who had wiped out an American battalion, went across the border and surrendered to six Mounties! The reason they did so was that they knew the Queen's treaties were kept."

Like many of his comrades at City College, Marty Lipset moved to the right politically over the years, though never to the Republican party. But he was less interested in spirited persuasion than in clear-eyed perception. He recognized that America's strengths were also its weaknesses. "I view the organizing principles and institutions of the United States as doubled-edged," he wrote in *American Exceptionalism*, published in 1996 and perhaps the summa of his work, "that many negative traits that currently characterize the society, such as income inequality, high crime rates, low levels of electoral participation, a powerful tendency to moralize which at times verges on intolerance toward political and ethnic minorities, are inherently linked to the norms and behavior of an open democratic society that appear so admirable." And he realized that the success of democratic government depended not only on institutional design but also on great leaders—"independent variables," in political science language—which America has been exceptionally lucky in having.

"There can be little question that the hand of providence has been on a nation which finds a Washington, a Lincoln, or a Roosevelt when it needs him," he wrote. And then he added, "When I write the above sentence, I believe that I draw scholarly conclusions, although I will confess that I write as a proud American." No one has done as good a job as explaining America to itself as Tocqueville did in the century before last. But few if any have come as close as Marty Lipset did in the century just ended. ♦

Endangered Industries

Who has the most to fear from the Democrats?

BY IRWIN M. STELZER

Now all the forecasts are in. Readers know what myriad experts think of the outlook for most of the world's economies, the securities traded on the world's exchanges, trends in the commodities markets, and the course of the once-mighty dollar. It would, therefore, contribute little to the sum total of knowledge were I to attempt to add my own forecast to those already available.

What readers might find useful instead is a short survey of American industries in which politics might trump economics in 2007—those that have attracted the special attention of the new Democratic majorities in the Congress.

The first that comes to mind is the pharmaceutical industry, set for tussles with five congressional committees over prices, safety, and competition from generic drugs. John Dingell, resuming the chair of the Energy and Commerce Committee, promises to "be quite diligent" in exploring health care issues; anyone who has appeared before "Big John" will know that being the object of the always-well-prepared Dingell's "diligence" can be uncomfortable indeed. Survive that, and you get to move on to Henry Waxman's Government Reform Committee, a venue in which my friend Dingell's courtliness has no place.

Voters are telling politicians that one of their principal worries is the soaring cost of health care in general, and of prescription drugs in particular. Older folks feel pressed by rising prices, and old folks tend to vote. So they are getting a hearing from the Democrats, who are eager to demonstrate that—unlike the Republicans, who they say are in the pockets of the big drug companies and the insurance lobby—they are for the little guy.

This means that they will attempt to empower the federal government to bargain with drug manufacturers on behalf of the 22.5 million elderly and disabled enrolled in the Medicare prescription drug benefit program. Presumably, mass buying will lower prices; possibly, it will be the precursor of federal price controls. That pressure will be supplemented by calls to allow reimportation of drugs from Canada, which now buys American-made pharmaceuticals at prices below those prevailing in this country. Never mind that the Canadians are "free riding," and not bearing any of the cost of the research and development that make these drugs available in the first place.

Low prices now, even at the cost of fewer new drugs in the future, are seen by Democratic strategists as one key to retaining control of Congress and seizing the White House in 2008. Cynics say that the assault on Big Pharma is also a way of sending a signal to the industry that its influence on Capitol Hill would be enhanced were it to increase the portion of its political giving that finds its way into Democratic coffers in the congressional and presidential contests in 2008.

Next in line for punishment will be the oil industry. "Big Oil," always a particular hate object of Nancy Pelosi and liberal Democrats, finds itself caught in the perfect political storm. Profits are at record levels; gasoline prices, although down a bit from their peak, are still high

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enough to have motorists muttering about price gouging; the Bush family and Vice President Cheney have long associations with the petroleum industry; the greens are out to cut consumption of oil, perhaps by raising fuel efficiency standards (not if Detroit's Dingell has anything to say about it); and there is a row over pipeline and refinery safety that will see Lord Browne of British Petroleum hauled before a few of the less gentle committee chairmen in the House.

Whether any of this will result in legislation affecting oil industry profits is not yet clear, but Congress will call for an increase in the royalty payments demanded by the government, and the removal of some of the tax benefits the industry has traditionally been accorded. Bush will be hard-pressed to veto any such legislation.

Politics will also rear its unlovely head in the airline industry. Congressional protectionists are looking for some way to demonstrate their America-first credentials, and have found it: They have frightened regulators into heading off Richard Branson's plan for a low-cost carrier, Virgin America, even though he complied with the corporate structure requirements laid down in the law. Never mind that U.S. airlines are flying at such high load factors (capacity utilization rates) that travelers are finding it difficult to get the bookings they want, and that frequent flyer programs have been made virtually worthless by a proliferation of "blackout days."

Then there are the defense contractors. The administration plans to send up to Congress a request for a substantial amount of new money to replace hardware depleted by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, rebuild the armed forces after decades of neglect, and fund the development of new aircraft and the other paraphernalia of defense. The Democrats will be reluctant to be seen to "short-change our soldiers," and will therefore more or less have to go along.

But they will be unconstrained in their assault on alleged corruption and waste by the merchants of death, as many of them view producers of military hardware, and on Halliburton and other companies they believe have ripped the government off with too-lucrative contracts for reconstruction in Iraq and, while they are at it, in Katrina-stricken areas of the United States. Nothing like calling for speedy action and then complaining that some of the bureaucratic contracting procedures were short-circuited.

Finally, there will be outrage, real and feigned, at the huge bonuses paid to Wall Street's top producers—and the howls will grow louder when the Democrats realize that the partners at Goldman Sachs are pikers compared with hedge fund managers, some of whom are taking home ten times as much as the Wall Street crowd that has dominated the headlines.

The Democrats have long contended that the average worker is not sharing in the nation's prosperity, that corporate profits are sopping up a too-large share of the national income, that globalization enriches the few who can thrive in an international labor market and penalizes the many who cannot compete with $1-a-day laborers. Never mind that the recent rise in real wages suggests the market is evening things out; the Democrats' complaints about distributive justice will now provide the basis for an assault on the tax system, and especially on the president's reductions in corporate and capital gains taxes, and in marginal tax rates.

This is not an argument that will be settled by recourse to reason and statistics, but by a tallying of potential voters. Al Gore failed in 2000 to get himself into the Oval Office with his appeal to the politics of class and envy, but that was then and this is now—and similar views held by the more emollient Barack Obama or the shrewder Hillary Clinton might, just might, resonate with voters if Congress can keep this issue alive for the next two years.

May all of this, factored into the forecasts you have received recently, increase your ability to foresee what is in store in 2007, which I join the editors in hoping will prove to be a good year. ♦

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Enter Pelosi, Stage Left

After 12 years, the Democrats are back in charge of Capitol Hill

By Andrew Ferguson

Tuesday, January 2, 2007, 12:30 P.M.

I don't get up to the Capitol building for reporting trips much anymore, having entered that late phase of a journalist's professional life when he forgoes the mundane gathering of facts and embarks instead on flights of pure, helium-filled speculation and theorizing. My mental image of the legislative branch is thus stuck in the 1980s and early '90s. And oh what a dump it was. Forty years of uninterrupted Democratic rule had imposed a Soviet-style squalor on the physical environment. Trash piled up like tumbleweed in hallways. The cops were surly and heavily armed. Blown lightbulbs could go weeks without being replaced. Urinals gushed in sluices across tile floors. The shelves in the few convenience shops were surreal in their economic illogic: a stack of last Thursday's *New York Times* would sit next to several hundred pair of laces for children's shoes and eight boxes of Mentos, but if you wanted a copy of that morning's *Washington Post* or a double-A battery, you were out of luck.

Yet there was nowhere else, within walking distance, for a customer to go. The suffocating effects of one-party monopoly were felt most painfully in the food service. Deep within dim, airless, subterranean cafeterias, a bolus or two of mystery meat would twitch and swell in sumps of watery gravy, stirred now and then by mental defectives wearing smocks. Sometimes the servers offered cold hamburgers as an alternative, or a litter of iceberg lettuce leaves wilting under a blanket of French dressing to satisfy the occasional health-food enthusiast. You could order any kind of soft drink so long as it was Coke, which arrived in smudged glasses, fizzless. You got an ice cube if you acted nice.

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Then Newt Gingrich and his Republican Revolutionaries arrived to sweep it all away.

So here I am, almost twelve years to the day since Gingrich's ascendancy, in the Food Court of the Longworth Office Building on the House side of Capitol Hill, and I am stunned by the transformation. What was once the "Longworth Cafeteria" now dazzles and gleams and pops with light and color, as though someone from the private sector, and not a patronage worker kept in place by the partisan oligopoly, had put it together in hopes of pleasing customers. And that's what happened. The Gingrichites took power and turned the food services and concession stands over to people with a profit interest. And now we have the kind of cornucopia only a free market can create; an array of foods named after places we all wish we lived in instead of Washington: A Santa Fe Chicken Special from Malibu Wraps, Carolina Brisket from Austin Blues. And the drinks! Starbucks coffee and Melon Smoothies! Endless cups of Diet Sprite—with ice! Freshets of Mr. Pibb!

It is fashionable these days, especially among disaffected conservatives, to say that the Gingrich Revolution amounted to next to nothing and ended in failure. Let those doubters come here. Let them come to the Longworth Food Court.

Yet now, undeniably, the Revolution is over. In two days Nancy Pelosi will be sworn in as speaker of the House while the Senate once again will fall into the hands of Democrats. I've decided to see as much of this spectacle as I can handle over the next couple days, and I thought I'd find the Capitol bustling in anticipation.

But it's oddly subdued. The 100 Hours of frenetic legislative activity that the new majority had promised has been delayed. Instead of celebrating Democrats, the nation is now in its seventh day of an eight-day mourning period for a Republican, Gerald Ford—roughly one day of mourning for every four months of the Ford administration. (By the same calculation, Bill Clinton's funeral will last nearly a month.) Congressmen are filtering into the food court from

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the memorial service up at the National Cathedral. They grab a cup of soup and take a seat at a table and thumb their BlackBerries, while their long-suffering wives chew quietly, staring into the middle distance.

I'm in a reverie, too. The last time I was in the Longworth Cafeteria was that day in 1995 when the first Republican majority in forty years was sworn in. The most telegenic event of the many festivities was held here. It was meant to confirm a cherished belief of the Gingrich Revolutionaries: that the popular culture, from which conservatives had so long been ostracized, and with which they were supposedly so out of touch, was at last turning in a rightward direction. "Hollywood is moving like crazy," the activist David Horowitz announced in the *New York Times*. "The liberals are all fed up with Clinton. Clinton is over. It's happening." To demonstrate the point, Horowitz said he was soon going to stage a Hollywood extravaganza starring Delta Burke and Gerald McRainey.

As if that weren't proof enough, here in the Longworth Cafeteria, at a "Family Reception" on that chilly afternoon in 1995, the lights dimmed and, in a sudden burst of music and fire, the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers appeared! Across a makeshift stage they kicked and leaped and angled their arms in semaphores of their miraculous power. Popular culture was ours. Dozens of congressmen and staff members had brought their children and grandchildren. The noise was overwhelming, and it only grew louder when the ultimate power ranger, Newt Gingrich himself, appeared behind them.

Thinking back to that halcyon day, as I lazily watch the congressmen ignore their wives, two discordant notes disturb my reverie. One was Gingrich's speech. It was as impossible then as it is now to keep Gingrich from giving a speech, and what he said that afternoon, once the Rangers stopped leaping and the children stopped screaming, foreshadowed a shift in the conservative sensibility, an accommodation that suggested less that the popular culture was becoming more conservative than that conservatism was becoming more like the popular culture. The presence of the Rangers, Gingrich said, "was personally empowering." His praise was extravagant.

"We wanted them here," he said, "because they're multiethnic role models in which women and men play equally strong roles."

The other discordant note involved a portly fellow grinning off to the side of the stage as Gingrich delivered his ode to multiculturalism. The fellow vibrated with a kind of proprietary pride. Now I know why. I dug up a press release the other day. Dated December 29, 1994, it announced that the Power Rangers "are appearing at the Capitol courtesy of motion picture producer and conservative Republican political leader Jack Abramoff."

Wednesday, January 3, 2007, 10:00 A.M.

In further evidence of their move to the political center, the Republicans long ago abandoned the idea, first suggested by an aide to President Nixon on one of the Watergate tapes, that they firebomb the Brookings Institution. It was a stupid idea. As the premier think tank of the "sensible center"—which is to say, moderate liberalism—Brookings is thoroughly inoffensive. If you doubt it, look at the sign up above the podium here in the Falk Auditorium at the Institution's headquarters on Massachusetts Avenue. It says "Independent Research Shaping the Future." What could be more anodyne? "Independent," in this context, means "liberal, but not so liberal you need to worry." It means "Trust us, we're not going to nationalize the banks." It means "Please don't firebomb us."

There are many gray heads in the audience, survivors most likely of the long-ago days of the Nixon Terror. We've gathered to hear a panel of Brookings experts discuss "The First 100 Hours: A Preview of the New Congress and its Agenda." I decided to come to the panel after I downloaded from her website speaker-to-be Nancy Pelosi's "new book," *A New Direction for America*. They call it a book but it's really just a thirty-page PowerPoint presentation, the Democratic version of the famous Republican Contract With America in 1994. The Republicans vowed to vote on the provisions of their contract in the first 100 days of the new Congress. *A New Direction* promises, pointlessly, that Democrats will vote on their proposals in the first 100 hours of their Congress. If things continue this way the next time the Republicans win an election they'll have exactly one hour and forty minutes to pass everything. I think I speak for the American people when I say we're sick and tired of this partisan one-upmanship.

The experts assembled on the stage seem to agree with me and the American people. Hurry, rush-rush, urgency—all this is anathema to liberals of the sensible center, who value deliberation and consensus above all, so long as the deliberation arrives at a consensus that is sensibly liberal. And the experts are the cream of the Brookings crop, the institution's all stars, making for a kind of think-tank Concert for Bangladesh: There's the fiscal expert Alice Rivlin, the education expert Lois Rice, the foreign affairs expert Bruce Riedel, and, serving as moderator—as though these guys needed moderation!—the congressional expert Thomas Mann. If you're a veteran Washingtonian like me, you look at a panel like this and you think: "Wow." And then you think: "Wait. Where the hell is E.J. Dionne?"

I've been checking my watch, and we're only four minutes into the discussion before Tom Mann says, "The devil is in the details." The reason think tank experts use this phrase so often is that they themselves are detail people. They are mad for minutiae, they are nanonerds, and emphasizing the

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details is, as the economists say, a way of raising barriers to entry, a strategy for keeping out non-detail-oriented competitors who might think that sometimes the devil is not, in fact, in the details. If details are the most important thing, then detail people rule. And these guys rule.

Thus all four of them find much to disapprove in Pelosi's *New Direction for America,* which is a soufflé of focus-group generalizations. One of the 100-Hour agenda items is cutting the interest rate on federally guaranteed student loans in half. "Lowering the cost to students increases the cost to the government," Ms. Rice says sagely, "and there are no decent cost estimates for that." Who will come up with those details? Ms. Rivlin worries that fixing the Alternative Minimum Tax—at the mention of this think tank favorite, a shudder runs through the room—might complicate new "pay-go rules," thus putting into doubt the practicality of two more Democratic priorities. Riedel mentions that another 100-Hour item—instituting the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission report—is complicated by the fact that almost all of the major recommendations of the 9/11 Commission report have already been enacted. And by Republicans.

"What I'm taking away from this," Mann says, "is we need a more deliberative process in the Congress."

It's interesting that these Democratic experts find so little that's compelling in the Democratic 100-Hour agenda, but to be honest, the discussion is pretty boring. Yet I refuse to leave until Mann uses the phrase "eight-hundred-pound gorilla." No panel, indeed no think tank, can go for long without mention of "the eight-hundred-pound gorilla," anymore than it can move forward without referring to "the elephant in the room" or, on special occasions, the "eight-hundred-pound gorilla in the room." If I've heard Mann say it once I've heard him say it a hundred times, and it never fails to delight.

This morning it is the Iraq war that is the eight-hundred-pound gorilla, Mann says. And the minute he lets this metaphorical cat out of the bag the other people in the room grab it by the horns and kick it through the goal posts.

"The problem," says one audience member, "is that this big gorilla over there in the corner is using emergency supplementals"—a special kind of appropriation bill—"to scoop all the hors d'oeuvres off the table."

Riedel says he thinks the "big gorilla in the room should pay for all its hors d'oeuvres, its entrée, and its dessert all at the same time in one place."

By the time Ms. Rivlin mentions the "donut hole" in Medicare Part D, I'm starving. It's lunchtime.

January 3, 2007, 12:45 P.M.

And who better to have lunch with than Congressman Barney Frank? To mark his rise this week to the chairmanship of the House Financial Services Committee, he's been chosen as the luncheon speaker to a crowd of reporters at the National Press Club ballroom.

How to describe the NPC ballroom? Well, let me quote Eric Sevareid, the famous CBS newsman. "This room is the sanctum sanctorum of American journalism," Sevareid once said. "It's the Westminster Hall, it's Delphi, the Mecca, the Wailing Wall, the only hallowed place I know of that is bursting with irreverence."

The quote is on a plaque at the entrance to the ballroom. It's baloney from start to finish, of course. The ballroom is neither hallowed nor bursting with irreverence, and Frank could be guaranteed a warm reception from the hacks as they picked at their grilled salmon. Even though the mainline press has been relatively tough on the Democrats this week—running concocted stories on how they're reneging on their promises of bipartisanship, for example—the coverage is nothing like what Gingrich received. In the month before the '94 election, the Center for Media and Public Affairs found that every single story about Gingrich on the nightly news was negative: a clean sweep unmatched before or since.

And it was simply taken for granted. Waiting in line with other reporters to attend a Gingrich press conference the day he became speaker, I found myself next to the revered columnists Mary McGrory and Murray Kempton.

"You're a Republican," McGrory said to me suddenly. "So I'll ask you. What do you think is the most despicable thing Newt Gingrich has ever done? That we know about, I mean."

Before I could answer, Kempton intervened.

"Leave him alone, Mary dear," Kempton said. "There's too much to choose from." But he ventured a guess anyway, and before long the others in line, all of them beat reporters, had joined us in a spirited analysis of the general despicableness of the new speaker, before we were ushered in to his first press conference.

Neither Nancy Pelosi nor Barney Frank will face anything remotely like this, needless to say. "Our speaker is known for his quips," says the reporter who introduces Frank after lunch. "He has said, for example, that conservatives are people who believe life begins at conception and ends at birth." Hearty laughs! But Frank has his serious side, too: "He has fought for affordable housing and for equal rights for gays and lesbians." And as the new chairman of financial services, "he has promised not to be reflexively anti-business."

By the sound of it, however, he will be reflexively busy. Over the next forty minutes, Frank calls for instituting a single-payer national health care system, guaranteeing the mortgage of every house up to the median home price, forcing Wal-Mart and other retailers to unionize, reducing the president's trade authority, and regulating excessive corporate compensation.

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But in the Congress, he says, there's an institutional bias against getting anything done. "In any fight," he says, "whoever wants not to do something starts off with about a 25 percent advantage."

It's the most reassuring thing I've heard all day.

January 3, 2007, 3:30 P.M.

Chairman Frank told us that the chief problem we face as Americans is the widening gulf between rich and poor. "Only a small segment of the population is benefiting from economic growth," he said, "while the vast majority is not." Looking around here at the Mellon Auditorium, in the Commerce Department on Constitution Avenue, I know exactly what he means. Tuxedoed waiters carry champagne flutes on silver trays past gilded columns. Under the coffered ceiling, tables are laid out with pink petit fours and strawberries in cream and—I'm serious about this—cucumber sandwiches with the crusts cut off. Floral displays six feet high are spaced about the parquet floor. This is a "Women's Tea," sponsored by the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, the chief fundraising apparatus of the Democratic party, and these women, hundreds of them, are loaded.

Tomorrow Pelosi will take the chair as the new speaker of the House, and her picture will be taken as children swarm about her to touch her gavel, and she'll say once more that this fulfillment of her personal ambition has been an event of great historical importance, but never could her message be more forcefully expressed than it is here, surrounded by wealthy women who have been invited to share in her success because they have donated generously to her political party. They have all been given copies of *Ms.* magazine as party favors, along with buttons showing a version of the old Rosie the Riveter poster from World War II, with Pelosi's face Photoshopped over Rosie's. "A Woman's Place is in the House . . . As Speaker!" it says.

Master of ceremonies is the congresswoman Rosa DeLauro.

"When Nancy takes the gavel tomorrow," she shouts, "she takes it for all of us—for every little girl who wondered what they could be when they grew up. And tomorrow we'll find out the answer: anything you want to be!"

She introduces a slide show covering the career of the late Texas governor Ann Richards, which plays out over a recording of "Don't Fence Me In." She piles praise on Richards's daughter Cecile, now president of Planned Parenthood. And she introduces Pelosi's 8-year-old granddaughter Madeline to talk about her "Mee-Mee."

"I love to be with Mee-Mee because she takes me to fun places like the Capitol building," the little girl says, reading haltingly from a sheet of paper. Sighs rise from the crowd. The kid is incredibly cute. But coached. "My brother Alex made a wish that Mee-Mee would become speaker so that the world would be in better hands. I'm glad his wish came true."

Then another slide show, this time of Pelosi's career, under the '70s tune by Helen Reddy, "I Am Woman." And then the speaker-to-be herself takes the microphone. She mentions Ann Richards again. "That was Ann's favorite song—'Don't Fence Me In'—and that's women's message: Don't Fence Us In!"

She goes on to offer "praise for famous women"—for Molly Yard of the National Organization for Women "who was there for me for everything I ever did"; for the suffragettes, and for Sala Burton, the congresswoman who, on her deathbed, pushed Pelosi to run for Congress.

"And let's hear it for my mother," Pelosi says. Her mother was the wife of the mayor of Baltimore. "She lived at a time when options were limited," Pelosi says, yet she managed to drag her children into every facet of political life, walking precincts, stuffing envelopes, entertaining the swirl of cronies who moved in and out of the family home—a life she, the new speaker, hoped to bequeath to her own children and grandchildren, and by extension to all children, yours and maybe mine, on whose behalf her labors are undertaken.

"This Congress will be about the children," she says, "We will ask, 'Where's the child care?' We will recognize that when we women are at work, we need to provide quality child care for our children. Everything we do—everything we do—will be done with an eye to its impact on our children."

The cheering among the women in the audience, dressed in elegant pantsuits and wreathed in pearls and gold, soars as Pelosi calls to the stage every Democratic member of Congress. They take turns embracing her and then fan out behind her. Glancing across them one by one, I catch a disheartening picture. For all the talk of how the rise of women in politics will transform America, this is just another collection of professional pols, not much different from the guys and gals who gathered behind Gingrich and then Denny Hastert, with the same ratio of nutters, ideologues, incompetents, egomaniacs, and borderline crooks spread among the usual mass of grinning mediocrity.

And I realized that here was the real message of this week. The Democrats aren't celebrating the triumph of women in politics, not really. They're celebrating the triumph of politics over everything. ♦

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The Consequences of Failure in Iraq

They would be awful.
But failure can still be averted.

By Reuel Marc Gerecht

What would be the consequences of an American withdrawal from Iraq? Trying to wrap one's mind around the ramifications of a failed Iraq—of an enormous, quite possibly genocidal, Sunni-Shiite clash exploding around American convoys fleeing south—is daunting. In part, this is why few have spent much time talking about what might happen to Iraq, the region, and the United States if the government in Baghdad and its army collapsed into Sunni and Shiite militias waging a battle to the death. Among its many omissions, the Iraq Study Group's stillborn report lacked any sustained description of the probable and possible consequences of a shattered Iraq.

Before embarking on such an inquiry, a few remarks are in order about American attitudes and about the continuing reasons for hope in Iraq. Americans, for whom foreign policy has always been loaded with moral imperatives and ethical restraints, don't like staring into a bloody moral abyss that we largely dug. The growing bipartisan endeavor to blame the mess in Iraq on the Iraqis is, among other things, a human reaction to screen out all ugly incoming data. For most of Washington, if not the country, Iraq is already Vietnam—no possibility of success, thousands of wasted lives, a grim conviction that it would be best to let the ungrateful, pitiless foreigners take their country back. As the pro-war *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman wrote recently: "Adding more troops makes sense only if it's to buy more time for positive trends that have already begun to appear on the horizon. I don't see them."

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In other words, if one can't envision victory—a political solution where Sunni and Shiite Arabs in Iraq live peacefully with each other—then trying to forestall the ghastly consequences of an American flight from Iraq isn't necessary. If we don't have a workable definition of "success," then we don't have a moral obligation to prevent a catastrophe, even one that is largely our fault. The morality of this reasoning is precarious: Should we never try to stop massive slaughters, or try to stop them only when we didn't provoke them, or try to stop them only when we can't get hurt in the effort? Seeing positive trends is difficult when physical security in Baghdad has been declining, primarily because then-Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and his generals John Abizaid and George Casey didn't see this elementary duty of an occupying power as their mission.

But the quintessential American pragmatism of Friedman's reasoning is beyond doubt. And the Bush administration has been remiss in neglecting to describe what's probably over the horizon if we win, and if we lose. Senior administration officials have remained largely quiet about the good, the bad, and the truly calamitous possibilities, allowing the president almost alone to sally forth in Churchillian speeches. And those speeches have usually lacked what Churchill's had in spades: acute appreciation of the hardships and vivid descriptions of what failure would mean. Rhetorically, Iraq has become too difficult to handle.

Iraq overwhelms. Yet it shouldn't. Even a pessimist can still look at the place and believe it isn't beyond hope. The counterinsurgency plan proffered by retired four-star General Jack Keane and the military historian Frederick Kagan offers a decent chance of success—probably the last one the Bush administration will have before Iraq cracks up. If the president commits the necessary resources along the lines recommended by Keane-Kagan, the radicalization of Iraq can likely be reversed. The political and democratic possibilities in Mesopotamia remain greater than most in Washington's foreign policy estab-

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lishment imagine. Post-Saddam Iraq was never going to be a liberal democratic country dominated by Westernized, secular Iraqis. The great Iraqi accomplishment will not be the establishment of a model for peaceful transition from dictatorship to democracy. That possibility died in the autumn of 2003. But the odds of Iraq's becoming a profoundly imperfect yet functioning democracy, where power changes hands through elections, remain at least as good as those favoring the birth of a Shiite dictatorship—provided the United States adopts the right tactics.

Post-Saddam Iraq has become for us and the Iraqis an act of tenacity. It is overwhelmingly the story of one community, the Shia, endeavoring to adopt a democratic political arrangement while being bombarded by Sunni Arab insurgents and holy warriors, and dismissed as disloyal Arab Muslims by the Middle East's Sunni Arab intellectual and religious classes. The Arabic satellite channel Al Jazeera has its virtues—watching Arab religious fundamentalists and pan-Arab nationalists scream at each other is an unalloyed good in the Middle East—but its coverage and commentary on the Iraqi Shia have been on the whole disgraceful, a nonstop apologia for murderous anti-Shiite bigotry.

With little American appreciation, Iraq's Shiite leadership, particularly the traditional clergy behind Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, has endeavored to keep its own from imploding into hostile, warring militias. A Shiite dictatorship, the only other possible outcome in Iraq, is still a verboten subject among the Shia. By comparison, it's not hard to find Sunni Arabs pining for the return of a Sunni strongman; since its early love affair with Ayad Allawi, much of Washington would have gladly compromised democratic principle for dictatorial strength.

The Iraqi Shia still seem to know that they cannot go down the dictatorial road without provoking internecine strife. As Sistani and his followers have tried to point out, democracy for the Shia is first a matter of communal survival. And as long as this conviction holds, the compromises necessary to keep the Shiites together offer Iraq's Sunni Arabs a way out of insurgency and holy war. This will be neither easy nor pretty. Even in the best of circumstances—even if a successful American-led counterinsurgency takes hold and Iraqi politics slowly becomes more normal—Shiites wanting revenge for Sunni atrocities, and Sunnis wanting revenge against Shiite death squads, will seek opportunities to strike. If Westerners reflected on the violence of their own democratic evolution, they might be more appreciative of the distance the Iraqis have come under ghastly circumstances.

The miracle in Iraq is that the Iraqi government, feeble and sectarian as it is, hasn't given up trying to play by the rules and hasn't forsaken completely its imperfect constitution. The presence and power of Americans is undoubtedly the primary reason the worst hasn't happened. But only the blind, deaf, dumb, or politically malicious cannot see that the Iraqis themselves, especially the Shia, are still trying desperately to avoid the abyss. Having seen, then, that there is still sufficient political hope on the Iraqi horizon, let us return to the matter of what will likely happen in Mesopotamia and the Middle East if the United States departs.

Certainly the most damning consequence of failure in Iraq is the likelihood that an American withdrawal would provoke a take-no-prisoners civil war between the Sunni and Shiite Arabs, which could easily reach genocidal intensity. The historical parallel to have in mind is the battle between subcontinent Hindus and Muslims that came with the independence of India. Although of differing faiths, the pre-1947 Hindus and Muslims were often indistinguishable culturally, linguistically, and physically. Yet they "ethnically cleansed" their respective new nations, India and Pakistan, with exuberance. Somewhere between 500,000 and one million Muslims and Hindus perished, tens of thousands of women were raped, and more than ten million people were forced to flee their homes. This level of barbarism, scaled down to Iraq's population, could quickly happen in Mesopotamia, long before American forces could withdraw from the country. (And it's worth recalling that few British officials anticipated the communal ferocity that came with the end of the Raj.)

Certain Western observers of Iraq, and many Arab commentators, have suggested that it is the American presence in Mesopotamia that aggravates the differences between Shiite and Sunni. If the Americans were to leave, then a modus vivendi would be reached before massive slaughter ensued. Shared Arabism and the Prophet's faith would helpfully reassert themselves. Yet, this seems unlikely. Iraq since 2003 strongly suggests a different outcome. Violence in both the Shiite and Sunni zones has gone up, not down, whenever American and British forces have decreased their physical presence in the streets and their intrusion in government affairs. Sunnis and Shiites who see no Americans are killing each other in greater numbers than Sunnis and Shiites who do see Yanks patrolling their neighborhoods.

Although it would be very difficult for either Sunni or Shiite Baghdadis to say so, they probably both look back nostalgically to those days in 2004 when anxious, trigger-happy American military convoys posed the greatest risk to life and property on the roads.

There are, fortunately, still many places in Iraq where Shiite and Sunni Arabs are not killing each other. In Baghdad, this is less the case precisely because Baghdad is the center of power. The Iraqi Sunni identity as it has

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developed since the fall of the Ottoman Empire is in many ways all about Baghdad. The centripetal eminence of the city for them is far greater than for the Shiites—even for the Shiites of the "Sadr City" ghetto, who have provided the manpower for the worst of the capital's Shiite militias. The Sunni insurgency and holy war have always been more about maintaining Sunni power than about repelling infidel invaders. They stand in sharp contrast to the great Shiite rebellion of 1920, which was a reaction against the religiously intolerable dominion of the British in Mesopotamia, not a Shiite assertion of power among the Arab denizens of what soon became Iraq.

Breaking the back of the Sunni insurgency has always meant denying the rejectionist Sunni Arab camp (possibly a pretty large slice of the city's Sunni population) any hope of dominating Baghdad and thus the country. If the Americans undertake this task, the Sunni Arab population, especially those who don't back the insurgents and the holy warriors, will sustain relatively little damage. We know how to clear Sunni neighborhoods in the capital—we've just never had the American manpower to hold what we've cleared. However, if the Shiites end up doing this (and it will be the Shiite militias that do it, not the Iraqi army, which would likely fall apart pretty quickly once U.S. military forces started withdrawing from the capital), the Sunni Arab population of Baghdad is going to get pulverized. The Sunni and Shiite migration we've so far seen from Baghdad is just a trickle compared with the exodus when these two communities battle en masse for the city and the country's new identity.

If we leave Iraq any time soon, the battle for Baghdad will probably lead to a conflagration that consumes all of Arab Iraq, and quite possibly Kurdistan, too. Once the Shia become both badly bloodied and victorious, raw nationalist and religious passions will grow. A horrific fight with the Sunni Arabs will inevitably draw in support from the ferociously anti-Shiite Sunni religious establishments in Jordan and Saudi Arabia, and on the Shiite side from Iran. It will probably destroy most of central Iraq and whet the appetite of Shiite Arab warlords, who will by then dominate their community, for a conflict with the Kurds. If the Americans stabilize Arab Iraq, which means occupying the Sunni triangle, this won't happen.

A strong, aggressive American military presence in Iraq can probably halt the radicalization of the Shiite community. Imagine an Iraq modeled on the Lebanese Hezbollah and Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps. The worst elements in the Iranian regime are heavily concentrated in the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps and the Ministry of Intelligence, the two organizations most active inside Iraq. The Lebanese Hezbollah is also present giving tutorials. These forces need increasing strife to prosper. Imagine Iraqi Shiites, battle-hardened in a vicious war with Iraq's Arab Sunnis, spiritually and operationally linking up with a revitalized and aggressive clerical dictatorship in Iran. Imagine the Iraqi Sunni Islamic militants, driven from Iraq, joining up with groups like al Qaeda, living to die killing Americans. Imagine the Hashemite monarchy of Jordan overwhelmed with hundreds of thousands of Iraqi Sunni Arab refugees. The Hashemites have been lucky and clever since World War II. They've escaped extinction several times. Does anyone want to take bets that the monarchy can survive the implantation of an army of militant, angry Iraqi Sunni Arabs? For those who believe that the Israeli-Palestinian peace process is the epicenter of the Middle East, the mass migration of Iraq's Sunni Arabs into Jordan will bury what small chances remain that the Israelis and Palestinians will find an accommodation. With Jordan in trouble, overflowing with viciously anti-American and anti-Israeli Iraqis, peaceful Palestinian evolution on the West Bank of the Jordan river is about as likely as the discovery of the Holy Grail.

The repercussions throughout the Middle East of the Sunni-Shiite clash in Iraq are potentially so large it's difficult to digest. Sunni Arabs in Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia will certainly view a hard-won and bloody Shiite triumph in Iraq as an enormous Iranian victory. The Egyptians or the Saudis or both will go for their own nukes. What little chance remains for the Americans and the Europeans to corral peacefully the clerical regime's nuclear-weapons aspirations will end with a Shiite-Sunni death struggle in Mesopotamia, which the Shia will inevitably win. The Israelis, who are increasingly likely to strike preemptively the major Iranian nuclear sites before the end of George Bush's presidency, will feel even more threatened, especially when the Iranian regime underscores its struggle against the Zionist enemy as a means of compensating for its support to the bloody Shiite conquest in Iraq. With America in full retreat from Iraq, the clerical regime, which has often viewed terrorism as a tool of statecraft, could well revert to the mentality and tactics that produced the bombing of Khobar Towers in 1996. If the Americans are retreating, hit them.

That would not be just a radical Shiite view; it was the learned estimation of Osama bin Laden and his kind before 9/11. It's questionable to argue that the war in Iraq has advanced the radical Sunni holy war against the United States. There should be no question, however, that an American defeat in Mesopotamia would be the greatest psychological triumph ever for anti-American jihadists. Al Qaeda and its militant Iraqi allies could dominate west-

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ern Iraq for years—it could take awhile for the Shiites to drive them out. How in the world could the United States destroy these devils when it no longer had forces on the ground in Anbar? Air power? Would we helicopter Special Forces from aircraft carriers in the Persian Gulf into a distant war zone when our intelligence information on this desert region was—as it would surely be—somewhere between poor and nonexistent? Images of Desert One in 1980 come to mind. Neither Jordan nor Kuwait may be eager to lend its airfields for American operations that intend to kill Sunnis who are killing Shiites.

What successes we've had in both Iraq and Afghanistan have come from our having boots on the ground. There is simply no way in hell the CIA or military intelligence will have reliable collection programs once the United States significantly draws down. Are we going to reinvade Western Iraq? Senators John Kerry and Barack Obama say they would've been tougher on al Qaeda than the Bush administration. One wonders how they would prove that in Iraq after the Americans leave. Give weaponry to a radicalized Shiite army slaughtering Sunnis on its western march toward the Jordanian border?

All of this may be too abstract for most Democrats and many Republicans. Americans are particularly weak when it comes to understanding and empathizing with folks who express their love of God through death. But these things matter to Islamic holy warriors and those who have the psychological profile of would-be martyrs. We had better hope that America's counterterrorist measures are sufficient to block the likely substantial increase in jihadist recruits. Rest assured that with America in retreat, and the Iraqi Shia slowly grinding the Sunni Arabs into the dust, Egypt and Saudi Arabia are unlikely to be helpful in the war on terrorism. The Egyptian and Saudi reflex to support militant fundamentalists in times of stress (even as they also repress them) will surely shift into hyperdrive as Cairo and Riyadh grow ever more fearful of an Iranian-led Shiite offensive. The Egyptians and the Saudis, the two intellectual powerhouses for Arab jihadism against the United States, are likely to view a Shiite conquest of Iraq that creates hundreds of thousands of Iraqi Sunni Arab refugees in the same light as Iran's Islamic revolution.

More than any other event, that revolution provoked a global Wahhabi and Salafi missionary movement to counter the spread of Iranian-led radical Islam, which in turn set the stage for the rise of bin Ladenism. Combine a Shiite triumph in Iraq with a resurgent hard core in Iran who may soon acquire nuclear weaponry, and the provocative possibilities of a shattered Iraq could be even greater than those of the Islamic revolution in 1979. And with a U.S. defeat in Mesopotamia, the reborn Taliban movement in Afghanistan and Pakistan, too, will gain ground.

It is hard to imagine any event that could give the virulently anti-American Islamists in these two countries more inspiration and hope. Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf is already cutting deals with al Qaeda-supporting tribes along the border with Afghanistan. Is it really reasonable to imagine, as many Democrats apparently do, that the United States, its European allies, and the Afghans and Pakistanis who like us will become stauncher in the defense of Afghanistan after the Americans abandon Iraq? Isn't it much more likely that the Taliban, al Qaeda, and General Musharraf will see things just the other way round? Will the Russians and Chinese, who increasingly are engaging in nefarious practices in the Middle East and elsewhere, be so gracious as to not exploit America's flight from Iraq? Russia has already become an assassination-happy rogue state that sells antiaircraft missiles, which could only be used against the United States and Israel, to Tehran. Soviet patterns in the Middle East are returning.

It is in our power to prevent these awful scenarios. We should have taken great hope in the recent refusal of Grand Ayatollah Sistani to bless a "unity" government that might well have led to violent strife among the Shia—a surefire recipe for destroying the country. Sistani's refusal to endorse this plan effectively killed it. The good and indispensable news: Sistani's power isn't dead. Even Sadr's men are still making pilgrimages to see the old man. Almost politically neutered after Sunni militants blew up the Golden Shrine at Samarra in February 2006, the cleric and the peaceful Shiite consensus he represents are still alive. On the Shiite side, men of moderation still have the power of moral suasion and tradition.

No one on the Shiite side has publicly challenged Sistani's support for democracy. There are certainly many men in the dominant Shiite political parties who would privately prefer some kind of religiously oriented dictatorship. But as Thomas Friedman once insightfully remarked, it's what people say publicly in the Muslim Middle East that matters. In public, Shiite support for democratic government appears as strong today as it was before the attack on the Golden Shrine, the event that caused Shiite forbearance against Sunni Arab depredations to run out.

By contrast, the question that remains open is whether the United States can take the pounding from the Sunni insurgents and holy warriors and stay true to its original mission. Despite his mistakes and his poor choices in personnel, President Bush has kept faith with the Iraqi people. He has fought the good and honorable fight. He has clearly seen the future if we falter. We can only hope that in America's coming great battle for Baghdad, both he and Sistani prove victorious. ♦

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The Last One Standing

Bush's Labor secretary is the only survivor of the original cabinet

By Whitney Blake

The resignation of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in December left only one cabinet member who's held her position since the beginning of the Bush administration—Labor Secretary Elaine Chao. Her longevity is due in part to her fierce loyalty to the president, which has raised the ire of some in the labor movement accustomed to less assertive Republican secretaries. But beyond personal allegiance, Chao can boast tangible results from her effort to reform decades-old regulations in dire need of modernization. Add to that a fiscal conservatism dutifully applied to the department's own bureaucracy, and it's no wonder this secretary is still "serving at the pleasure of the president."

Elaine Chao

Illustration by Earl Keleny

Chao, wife of Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell, was nominated by President Bush on January 11, 2001, after his original choice, Linda Chavez, came under fire over allegations that she had employed an illegal immigrant. At the time, Chao received praise from several major unions, including the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and the International Association of Machinists. Even the AFL-CIO—which had immediately objected to Chavez—indicated a willingness to work with Chao. Her conservative views were no secret, but she knew many union presidents well: As president and CEO of United Way (1992-1996), she had worked closely with AFL-CIO president John Sweeney and then CWA president Morton Bahr. As deputy administrator at the U.S. Maritime Administration (1986-1988), she had worked with Seafarers International Union president Mike Sacco. A day after her nomination, a *Washington Post* headline read, "Chao Knows Her Way Around Labor; Union Leaders Welcome a Solid Conservative."

Traditionally the Labor Department has served as the liaison between the unions—specifically, the AFL-CIO, which represents 54 unions and approximately 10 million workers—and the administration. When Chao took office, this changed in two fundamental ways.

First, she saw herself as an ambassador for working people, not just unionized workers, and she saw her chief mission as the advancement of Bush's economic agenda. She also realized that the decline of organized labor necessitated a new approach: In 2005, unionized workers constituted some 12.5 percent of the workforce, and only 7.8 percent of the private-sector workforce, down from an estimated 35 percent of the overall workforce in the mid-1950s and 16.8 percent of the private-sector workforce in 1983, the first year comparable union data are available.

Second, Chao and the department decided to work directly with any union that wanted to discuss an issue with them. As Deputy Secretary Steve Law explains, Chao adopted an "open door policy." Unions no longer had to filter their concerns through the AFL-CIO.

Bill Samuel, national legislative director of the AFL-CIO, notes that Chao hasn't followed in the footsteps of her predecessors. He cites comfortable working relationships with previous Republican labor secretaries including Elizabeth Dole, under George H.W. Bush, who he says

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championed stronger ergonomic standards and mediated the Pittston coal strike, and Bill Brock, under Ronald Reagan, who worked closely with labor on the modernization of labor laws.

The first order of business for Chao was to hire a qualified staff dedicated to advancing the president's message and vision. Law, who previously served as chief of staff from 2001 to 2003 and just announced he is leaving later this month, describes how she chose a team "with a basic philosophical viewpoint," in addition to expertise in labor and proven management skills. Low turnover among her department heads has made for continuity in policy.

An immigrant herself, Chao says she identifies strongly with the American dream. She left Taiwan with her mother and siblings at the age of eight to join her father, who had settled in America three years before. Arriving without knowing a word of English, she learned to adjust, following the lead of parents who had "tremendous faith in the promise of America" and the rewards of hard work. Some twenty years later, she was a White House fellow during the Reagan administration. From there she earned an M.B.A. at Harvard, then worked in the private sector for two years, and went on to a succession of jobs in the public and nonprofit sectors: deputy administrator of the Federal Maritime Administration, chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission, deputy transportation secretary, director of the Peace Corps, and president and CEO of United Way.

While foreign policy has dominated Bush's presidency, Chao's department has been working behind the scenes to significantly reshape labor laws over which Big Labor had developed a sense of ownership. Chao considers it one of her department's major accomplishments to have improved labor union disclosure procedures, which hadn't been updated since the Landrum-Griffin Act of 1959. In December 2002, Chao proposed revisions to the disclosure form for large labor unions, the LM-2 form, requiring more detailed financial disclosure from the 20 percent of unions with more than $250,000 in annual receipts. The changes went into effect in July 2004.

At first, unions bucked the call for accountability. Samuel considers the reforms "not much more than harassment," a "huge waste of time and money," and "far in excess" of the requirements for businesses and trade associations. He speculates that the Labor Department wants to keep the unions busy "filling out forms" rather than representing workers.

In fact, labor unions have far fewer requirements than corporations covered by the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, adopted in response to Enron and other business scandals. According to the Office of Labor-Management Standards, which oversees unions' disclosures to the department, unions have to file only once a year, using free electronic software; do not have to secure a certified audit; are audited by the department on average once every 150 years; don't have to follow specified accounting standards; are not required to retain outside oversight committees; and have to disclose simple quantitative data, but no qualitative data (such as analysis of material risks, expected future performance, and significant legal proceedings). Under Sarbanes-Oxley, corporations have to do all these things and more. They must file both quarterly and annual reports, as well as periodic reports for specific events, and are subject to copious other regulations.

Steve Law notes that in the end, most unions have seen the need for these steps, attended compliance assistance seminars hosted by the department, and overwhelmingly complied; in 2006, 93 percent of unions met the Office of Labor-Management Standards requirements.

Chao explains one principle behind the reforms this way: "We ask that labor organizations be responsive to their rank and file members." As a result of the new disclosure requirements, anyone can find out, for example, that from July 2005 to June 2006, 49 individuals employed at the national headquarters of the AFL-CIO had total compensation greater than $130,000.

The AFL-CIO's Samuel regards Chao as "very hostile" to organized labor, a sentiment shared by some, but not all, union leaders. A spokesperson for the Seafarers International Union told me they had a good working relationship with Chao. She has been extremely supportive of the merchant marine and willing to listen on several matters, he said, including the Jones Act, which requires ships traveling domestically to be American-owned and crewed; the U.S. Maritime Security Program, which provides subsidies in return for use of ships to transport materiel and military personnel in emergencies (such as tsunami relief); and Project America, which revived deep sea cruise tourism in the wake of September 11. Several other unions I contacted—the Service Employees International Union, UNITE HERE (comprising the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees and the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union), and the Communication Workers of America—declined to comment or did not return calls.

Another of Chao's regulatory victories was her success at reforming the confusing and ambiguous overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act. This law, unchanged since 1975, was updated in 2004 to guarantee overtime to white-collar workers earning below $23,660, up from the previous ceiling of only $8,060. (White-collar

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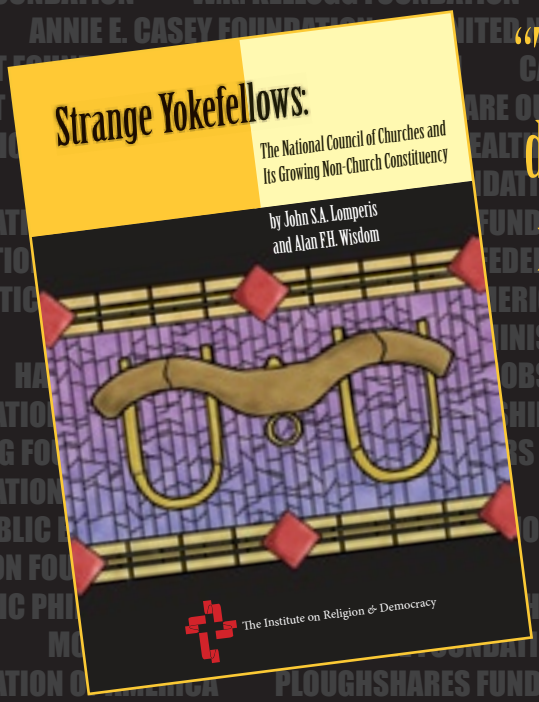
workers with salaries between $23,660 and $100,000 may qualify for overtime.) The reform also clarifies the categories of workers guaranteed eligibility, including police officers, firefighters, and paramedics, and protects existing union agreements on overtime. Blue-collar workers are guaranteed overtime regardless of salary or job description. Because of the enormous volume of lawsuits this outdated provision had generated (more than the employment discrimination statutes), its revamping is viewed as one of the largest tort reforms of the Bush administration.

The Labor Department estimates this will positively benefit more than 6.7 million workers. The AFL-CIO still protested the reform, claiming it gives employers new leeway to exempt workers, though Samuel concedes there is no evidence of this happening to date.

That's not to say that the AFL-CIO and the Labor Department can't get along at all. Samuel cites in particular the West Coast ports crisis of 2003, in which Chao intervened to avert a prolonged strike that would have cost the economy billions of dollars, as well as the efforts of the department to ensure equal rights to back wages for immigrants, irrespective of legal status. Also, collaboration with the department in the aftermath of September 11 and Hurricane Katrina led Samuel to believe that the relationship hasn't been "totally fruitless" for the AFL-CIO. Both Chao and Law point out that the department under this administration has had more "health and safety partnerships" with labor unions than any previous administration. Under such voluntary partnerships, the department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration branch (OSHA), often at the request of the union, works with employers to ensure their compliance with labor law—drug-free workplace requirements, for example, or health and safety protections for all workers including undocumented ones. Despite this, Chao has been criticized for what Samuel characterizes as consulting with business rather than enforcing the law.

While unions accuse Chao of appeasing big business, one major piece of legislation that was passed with little fanfare was poorly received by the corporate world: In August, President Bush signed the Pension Protection Act, a sweeping law requiring companies to meet their pension obligations and disclose information to employees about the financial state of their pension plans. Even Sen. Ted Kennedy supported the measure; the *Washington Post* quoted him as saying, "America's workers and retirees came out the winners."



"The National Council of Churches is more dependent on the liberal Ford Foundation than it is on 32 of its 35 member denominations."

Strange Yokefellows is an in-depth investigation of the non-church related funding and partnerships which are powering the National Council of Churches' left-wing political advocacy. It asks tough questions about the contradictions of an organization dedicated to Christian unity engaging in rough-and-tumble partisan politics.

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Not surprisingly, the AFL-CIO took issue with this initiative on grounds that it didn't go far enough—Samuel says the Labor Department should give corporations even more responsibility for employees' retirement security. Officially, the AFL-CIO neither supported nor attacked the measure; its local chapters came down on both sides.

Law points to this as proof that the Labor Department is not in the pocket of big business, as many unions contend, and he notes the double standard: It's "good sense" when Washington "cracks down" on corporations, but "anti-union" when Washington "expects unions to have financial integrity and be transparent." Chao has also taken it upon herself to publicize the economy's robust performance, as well as to combat disinformation and misinformation about some of her reforms. She says she sees the department's main objective as "vindicating workers' rights," whether workers are being taken advantage of by corporations or unions.

According to Law, President Bush has had a much more "activist vision" for the department than previous administrations. His concept of an ownership society, in particular, affects the Labor Department, involved as it is in workforce training. In this sense, the department is no longer merely a regulatory body, but a contributor to job creation, since a skilled workforce is a requirement for economic success. By all measures, the economy is strong: Unemployment is at 4.5 percent (4.6 overall for 2006), GDP growth was at 3.3 percent in 2006, annual productivity growth has been 3 percent since the beginning of 2001, real wages increased 2.3 percent over the past year ending in November, and 1.8 million new jobs were created in 2006 (and more than 7.2 million since August 2003).

Sustaining this rosy picture, however, requires placing a premium on increasing the supply of skilled workers. Chao acknowledges that our economy is "facing a skills gap" as we transition to a "knowledge-based" market. She sees the disparity in income, often touted by labor as an indicator of an economy that benefits only the wealthy, as the result of varying education levels: Unemployment among college graduates 25 years and older is less than 2 percent, but among high school dropouts more than 6.5 percent. The new jobs being created require more skills, and are better paid, but gaining access to training is difficult and complicated. In February, Bush announced the American Competitiveness Initiative, which introduced Career Advancement Accounts. The Labor Department oversees the implementation of these accounts—opposed by the AFL-CIO—which provide vouchers of up to $3,000 to workers seeking additional training in a program or at an institution of their choice.

In addition to reforming labor regulation, Chao has taken a new approach to the operation of the department itself, seeking ways to increase efficiency and trim bureaucracy. With 17,500 full-time employees and a budget of about $60 billion, Labor was the first cabinet department to get a "green" rating from the White House for sound management in all required categories, and year after year it has kept its proposed budget within OMB recommendations, which other departments routinely ignore. The department also completely restructured the 1965 Older Americans Act, under which the same nine organizations had received the bulk of grants to provide services to the low-income and disabled elderly. Chao instituted competitive bidding for these contracts, and since 2002, some $340 million has been distributed annually on the basis of merit.

With a Democratic Congress now in place, two key labor issues are on the agenda—an increase in the federal minimum wage and "card check" requirements. Democratic proposals call for an increase in the minimum wage from $5.15 to $7.25, though Samuel says the AFL-CIO would like to see a rate of $8.30 an hour adopted and indexed for inflation. Over the summer, Democrats blocked a minimum wage proposal that included tax cuts introduced by Republicans, a bill Chao saw as a balanced one that wouldn't dampen job creation.

Democrats have already seized on the second issue; House speaker Nancy Pelosi has announced her intention to bring the cleverly titled Employee Free Choice Act to the floor in early spring. This legislation would require the independent National Labor Relations Board to certify a union whenever a majority of employees at a given location have signed cards agreeing to designate the union as their representative. This "card-check" system, favored by unions, is an alternative to workers' deciding by secret ballot whether to unionize. Republicans argue that only the secret ballot makes for a truly fair choice; but Samuel told me there is "nothing free or fair" about the NLRB.

As for Elaine Chao, it appears she will remain in Bush's cabinet for the foreseeable future, as determined as ever to do battle for the president. Her legacy so far is one of transformation: expansion of the Labor Department's role from regulation to policy implementation and reform; reorientation of the secretary's role, from labor union representative to administration advocate; and some disciplining of the department itself through the application of stricter fiscal management to a bureaucratic behemoth. Chao hasn't been afraid to ruffle feathers and apply conservative principles in order to achieve practical, substantial results, and she has a long list of reforms—some of which had been talked about for decades—to show for it. ♦

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Henry Cabot Lodge, Ngo Dinh Diem, August 1963

A Winnable War

The argument against the orthodox history of Vietnam

BY MACKUBIN THOMAS OWENS

In the late summer of 1963, President John Kennedy dispatched two observers to South Vietnam. Their mission was to provide the president an assessment of the regime of Ngo Dinh Diem, the president of the Republic of Vietnam. The first, Major General Victor Krulak, USMC, the special assistant for counterinsurgency for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, visited some ten locations in all four Corps areas of Vietnam. Based on extensive interviews with U.S. advisers to the South Vietnamese army, Krulak concluded that the war was going well.

The second observer was Joseph Mendenhall of the State Department, who had been recommended to the president by Averell Harriman and Roger Hilsman. Mendenhall, like Harriman and Hilsman a longtime advocate of replacing Diem, visited three South Vietnamese cities where he spoke primarily to opponents of the South Vietnamese president. Unsurprisingly, he concluded in *his* report that if Diem and his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu remained in power, the Diem government was certain to fall to the Viet Cong, or the country would descend into religious civil war.

Triumph Forsaken
The Vietnam War, 1954-1965
by Mark Moyar
Cambridge, 542 pp., $32

Both Krulak and Mendenhall briefed Kennedy on September 10. So diametrically opposed were their conclusions that the president quipped, "The two of you did visit the same country, didn't you?"

After reading Mark Moyar's remarkable new book, *Triumph Forsaken*, readers accustomed to the "orthodox" view of the Vietnam war—entrenched in the academy and the press for decades—will no doubt have the same sort of "Kennedy moment." Could Moyar possibly be writing about the same war that is described (in the orthodox view) as, at best, a strategic error and, at worst, a brutal imperialist war of aggression—in any case, a tragic mistake?

The axioms of the orthodox view concerning the Vietnam war are well known: that Southeast Asia in general, and South Vietnam in particular, were not vital strategic U.S. interests; that the "domino theory"—the belief that the fall of South Vietnam to the Communists would lead to the collapse of other non-Communist regimes in Southeast Asia—was false; that the South Vietnamese government was hopelessly corrupt and did not command the allegiance of the South Vietnamese people; that among the most corrupt was the regime of Diem, who

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was good at repressing Buddhists (Diem was Catholic) but was losing to the Viet Cong Communists; that Ho Chi Minh was not a true Communist but a nationalist; and that the rejection of certain military options—the mining of Haiphong Harbor, the use of ground troops to interdict the Ho Chi Minh Trail—was proper given the fear of Chinese intervention.

According to the orthodox view, Vietnam was indeed a "quagmire," a war the United States was destined to lose.

Moyar's history takes issue with all of these contentions. A brilliant young scholar with a Cambridge doctorate who is currently teaching at the Marine Corps University in Quantico, Moyar is representative of a small but increasingly influential revisionist school that rejects the fundamental orthodox premise that America's involvement in Vietnam was wrongheaded and unjust.

The primary weakness of the orthodox school, Moyar demonstrates, is its constricted historical horizon. For the most part, orthodox historians have covered the war as if the only important decisions were made in Washington and Saigon. This is an example of what has been called "national narcissism," the idea that history is just about us. Of course, important decisions were also made in Hanoi, Beijing, Moscow, and many other places. Moyar has exhaustively consulted the relevant archives and uses them to demonstrate the very real limitations of the orthodox view. He not only places Vietnam in its proper geopolitical context, but demonstrates the Clausewitzian principle that war is a struggle between two active wills. An action by one side elicits a response from the other that may be unexpected.

Orthodox historians often act as if Hanoi pursued a course of action with little regard for what the United States did. But Moyar demonstrates that the North Vietnamese strategy was greatly affected by U.S. actions.

This point was driven home to me in 1983 when the late Douglas Pike, the foremost American expert on Vietnamese communism and an early proponent of Vietnam revisionism, delivered a paper at a Wilson Center symposium on the war. Pike observed that "the initial reaction of Hanoi's leaders to the strategic bombings and air strikes that began in February 1965—documented later by defectors and other witnesses—was enormous dismay and apprehension. They feared the North was to be visited by intolerable destruction which it simply could not endure." But the air campaign was severely constrained, a fact that became increasingly apparent to Hanoi. As a result, North Vietnamese leaders concluded that the United States lacked the will to bear the cost of the war.

Pike then made an extraordinary claim by comparing the effects of the constrained air campaign in 1965 and the "Christmas bombing" of 1972. Officially known as Linebacker II, this massive, around-the-clock air campaign far exceeded in intensity anything that had gone before. Hanoi was stunned.

"While conditions had changed vastly in seven years," Pike continued, "the dismaying conclusion to suggest itself from the 1972 Christmas bombing was that had this kind of air assault been launched in February 1965, the Vietnam war as we know it might have been over within a matter of months, even weeks."

Triumph Forsaken is one of the most important books ever written on the Vietnam war. The first of two projected volumes, it focuses on the period from the defeat of the French by the Viet Minh in 1954 to the eve of Lyndon Johnson's commitment of major ground forces in 1965. Moyar's thesis is that the American defeat was not inevitable: The United States had ample opportunities to ensure the survival of South Vietnam, but it failed to develop the proper strategy to do so. And by far our greatest mistake was to acquiesce in the November 1963 coup that deposed and killed Diem, a decision that "forfeited the tremendous gains of the preceding nine years and plunged the country into an extended period of instability and weakness."

Not surprisingly, Vietnamese Communists exploited that post-Diem instability and adopted a more aggressive and ambitious stance. Moyar argues that President Lyndon Johnson rejected several aggressive strategic options available to him, options that would have permitted South Vietnam to continue the war, either without the employment of U.S. ground forces or by a limited deployment of U.S. forces in strategically advantageous positions in the southern part of North Vietnam or in Laos. The rejection of these options meant that Johnson was left with the choice of abandoning South Vietnam, a step fraught with grave international consequences, or fighting a defensive war within South Vietnam at a serious strategic disadvantage.

Nothing illustrates the orthodox/revisionist divide more than their respective treatments of Ngo Dinh Diem. In the orthodox view, Diem was a tyrant losing control of his country, a Catholic running roughshod over a predominantly Buddhist populace. Moyar contends that this is false. In fact, Diem was an effective leader who put down the organized crime empires that had thrived before his rise to power. Nor was he a democrat: His legitimacy, in the eyes of the people, arose from his ability to wield power effectively and provide security for the people who were the target of the Communist insurgency. Indeed, under Diem's leadership, the back of the Communist insurgency had pretty much been broken by 1960.

This is a far cry from the orthodox view, but Moyar has some pretty good witnesses: the Communists themselves. Citing Communist documents, Moyar shows that they were honest enough to acknowledge their lack of success in the period leading up to the 1963 coup, as well as the fact that the Diem government was killing and capturing Communist cadres in unprecedented number, leading many survivors to defect.

So why has Diem been depicted the way he has? First, he was a victim of press bias: No one did more to undermine Diem's reputation in the United States than David Halberstam and Neil Sheehan. Far from providing a balanced picture of the war, they pushed a decidedly anti-Diem view, and their prejudice was so transparent

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that a 1963 congressional mission described the American journalists as "arrogant, emotional, un-objective, and ill-informed."

But then, these same reporters were themselves influenced by others with axes to grind. Much of the criticism of the Diem regime's military policy was fed to them by the maverick U.S. Army adviser, Lt. Col. John Paul Vann. In addition, many American reporters relied on a Vietnamese journalist named Pham Xuan An, a Reuters stringer later revealed to be a Communist agent whose very mission was to influence the American press. As journalists such as Stanley Karnow later admitted, Pham was very good at his job.

Sheehan and Halberstam, in turn, greatly influenced the new U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam, Henry Cabot Lodge, against Diem. They were especially effective in portraying Buddhists as victims of Diem's repression of non-Catholics. But the militant Buddhist leaders were far from the political innocents described by Halberstam and Sheehan, and the most important of them, Thich Tri Quang, was a brother of the North Vietnamese official in charge of subversion in the south. If Tri Quang was not a Communist himself, he was at least an agent of influence. Moyar provides evidence that many of the "Buddhist" protesters were, in fact, Communist provocateurs.

In fact, Diem's efforts to mollify the Americans by offering concessions to the Buddhists only invited more demands, undercut Diem's authority, and emboldened his enemies, who interpreted his attempts at compromise as weakness. The only man in South Vietnam who could reestablish order was Diem, but Ambassador Lodge insisted on further acts of conciliation, which led to further disorder. Lodge's continued meddling made Diem more intractable, which reinforced Lodge's predisposition to replace him.

If there is a villain in Moyar's account, it is Lodge. Influenced by American journalists, he saw Diem as an intransigent opponent of reform. But it was Lodge who proved to be heavy-handed and closed-minded, vices that led him to support the ouster of Diem as part of a personal vendetta. Moyar describes Lodge's duplicity: He told the president that he was unable stop the anti-Diem coup, but it was Lodge who instigated it in the first place, in defiance of Kennedy's wishes. In that sense, Kennedy was hoist on his own petard: He had sought to neutralize Lodge, a likely 1964 Republican presidential candidate, by sending him to Saigon; but when evidence of Lodge's duplicity became clear, Kennedy did not replace him for fear that Lodge would turn his ouster into a campaign issue.

It is generally accepted, even by orthodox chroniclers, that the coup and the subsequent assassination of Diem and Nhu were mistakes of the greatest magnitude. Ho Chi Minh understood the coup's import immediately: "I can scarcely believe that the Americans could be so stupid," he remarked. The Hanoi Politburo recognized the opportunity that the coup had provided the Communists: "Diem was one of the strongest individuals resisting the people and Communists. Everything that could be done in an attempt to crush the revolution was carried out by Diem. Diem was one of the most competent lackeys of the U.S. imperialists." And indeed, the coup provided the incentive for the Communists to push for a quick victory against the weak South Vietnamese government before the United States intervened.

Conditions continued to deteriorate, forcing Kennedy's successor, Lyndon Johnson, to consider an American escalation of the war to save South Vietnam. He did *not*, as many have argued, use the August 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident as an excuse to escalate U.S. involvement. That claim is belied by the fact that Johnson saw intervention only as a last resort to avoid the defeat of South Vietnam and what he thought would be the subsequent toppling of the Southeast Asian dominoes. Indeed, most observers at the time criticized Johnson for not responding forcefully enough to the Tonkin Gulf incident, and major U.S. ground intervention did not begin until nearly a year later.

Moyar contends that Johnson had viable military options that could have enabled South Vietnam to survive while avoiding the massive commitment of U.S. ground troops that began in 1965. I happen to agree, but I don't think Moyar sufficiently appreciates the immense pressure on U.S. political leaders to consider military options for Vietnam in the context of nuclear deterrence. When Johnson was weighing his options in Vietnam the United States was only three years removed from the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Indeed, we cannot understand U.S. strategic decisions in Vietnam without reference to nuclear deterrence. Many policymakers had come to believe that strategy in the traditional sense was no longer possible in the nuclear age. Rather than focusing on the choice of the proper means to achieve national goals, as strategy demands, policymakers saw Vietnam and similar cases as "crises" in need of control. The goal was to prevent a crisis from spinning out of control, leading to uncontrolled escalation, possibly to nuclear war.

Moyar does acknowledge the role of the academic theory of limited war, which was developed precisely to prevent a crisis from escalating. Most often associated with the Harvard political scientist Thomas Schelling, limited war theory emphasized using military force in a controlled way to "signal" one's opponent. The central idea was that rational actors on both sides would limit the steps they took in order to avoid the escalation of a crisis.

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara was a proponent of Schelling's theory, but the uniformed military and former President Eisenhower were skeptical. Limited war theory was the very negation of strategy, but McNamara and others wrongly saw the Cuban Missile Crisis as its validation. Unfortunately, the attempt to use limited war theory to shape U.S. policy and strategy for Vietnam proved especially counterproductive, if for no other reason than the "value of the object" for the North Vietnamese was greater than that of the Soviets in Cuba.

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One of Johnson's fears was that, if the United States invaded North Vietnam or Laos to interdict the Ho Chi Minh Trail, China would intervene. But contemporary Chinese documents make it clear that no such response was contemplated. Moyar shows that our actions in Vietnam were based on bad intelligence in the service of a flawed theory of war. This contention is supported by the fact that, in 1972-73, Richard Nixon employed many of the same options available to Johnson in late 1964, and these steps would most likely have preserved the independence of South Vietnam had it not been for the action of Congress in 1974-75 to completely cut off all military support to our ally.

No review can do full justice to this critically important book. *Triumph Forsaken* is meticulously documented and bold in its interpretation of the record. Even orthodox historians will be forced to acknowledge the magnitude of Moyar's scholarly achievement. It should, at the least, reopen the debate about America's Vietnam enterprise, reminding us that countries are not destined to win or lose wars. Victory or defeat depends on decisions actually made and strategies actually implemented. ♦

Going Downtown

How cities prosper, and why they decline.

BY JAY WEISER

The City sweeps 5,000 years of urbanism into 200-odd pages of text, from the earliest city-states of ancient Sumer to the modern Third World megacity of Lagos. And Joel Kotkin frames his chronological treatment by tracing three urban aspects through the millennia: Successful cities, he argues, prosper through a balance of security, the sacred, and commerce. These themes, while provocative, neglect the economic factors that create cities and let them prosper. The ambition is stunning and the research immense, but the result is often simplistic.

The City
A Global History
by Joel Kotkin
Modern Library, 256 pp., $21.95

Security is a necessary function: If there's no protection from internal crime or external invasion, no one will invest in the city. Kotkin correctly observes that post-World War II American cities deteriorated because they lacked internal security, with widespread crime. He also looks at security from external threats (the Roman Empire's cities flourished and waned with its military might) but doesn't consider whether a superior location and a skilled population are more important than defeating the occasional invader.

It's true, as Kotkin observes, that the Mongol invasion of Baghdad in 1258 destroyed that city's primacy in the Islamic world, but Baghdad is still (despite its current troubles) a major city. Similarly, modern Berlin and Tokyo bounced back after destruction. Kotkin doesn't address the recent work of the urban economist Edward Glaeser, who argues that cities historically arose at key junctions, like river mouths, to eliminate distance in the interaction of goods, people, and ideas; and that once a city is in place, human capital can create advantages that persist even after the original reason for foundation is superseded.

Kotkin offers a Goldilocks analysis of urban commerce, arguing that there can be too much, too little, or an amount that is just right. But the right amount is determined by the city's reason for being. It isn't clear that a booming commercial sector (in the sense of a major producer or entrepot of goods; Kotkin's definition is vague) is needed for success: As he notes, Paris has thrived for centuries as a government center. Kotkin frowns on the commercially oriented ancient Phoenician city-states for neglecting their political and military strength, leading to absorption by larger empires. But the Phoenicians had a centuries-long run as independent states, as did the German city-states of the Holy Roman Empire.

In this, he confuses the appropriate weight for commerce with the issue of efficient political scale. Some eras have had sufficient stability to permit long-distance trade, but insufficient economies of scale to support large states. In these periods, city-states can cheaply defend and govern a small area, and can buy whatever else is needed abroad. In other periods, a larger state may, in contrast to individual city-states, be a cheaper provider of public goods like security, roads, and a legal system since it can spread the cost out across an empire and penalize free riders who want to use the services without paying for them.

The Pax Romana is a famous example. When larger political entities are more efficient, the city-states get absorbed, but the cities remain: Athens, Milan, and even the old Phoenician cities of Sidon and Tyre are still with us today. (The recent city-state revival in places like Hong Kong, Singapore, and the Persian Gulf emirates was enabled by free-riding on larger powers like the United States and Great Britain for the costs of external security.) Excess or insufficient emphasis on commerce has nothing to do with it.

By focusing on commerce as an end in itself, Kotkin underplays the role of infrastructure in creating the conditions for commerce. Kotkin does note the investment in public transportation that fueled Manhattan's early-20th cen-

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tury skyscraper boom. But this is a key process rather than a sidelight. Chicago's Loop was named after its mass transit system; Los Angeles created its leading position in the Southwest by landing the termini of the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe railroads and, despite lacking a great natural harbor, building a major port. And four centuries ago, Japan's Tokaido road—now the route for the bullet train—helped create a national market. (Oddly, Kotkin claims that Japan's urban development during this period was slowed by restrictions on foreign commerce. But Edo [now Tokyo], with a population of one million, may have been the world's largest 18th-century city.)

The sacred character of cities, too, is treated inconsistently. At times Kotkin indicates that cities need a prominent civic religion, and at other points, that objects of civic pride like landmark skyscrapers can fill the function. Certainly something is needed for civic cohesion: In *Making Democracy Work*, Robert Putnam found that medieval northern Italian cities with a dense network of voluntary organizations (many of them religiously based) had more social cohesion and better-performing local economies in the 20th century than southern Italian cities that had thin networks in the Middle Ages. But there is no predictable relationship between civic religion and urban success.

Following in the footsteps of Max Weber's now-discredited Protestant Ethic thesis, Kotkin praises Calvinism as the backbone of Dutch 17th-century Golden Age economic achievement. But the hardcore Calvinists were actually the bitter enemies of the Amsterdam merchant class that drove the boom. Reheating the Protestant Ethic thesis for a new region, he trots out Singapore dictator Lee Kuan Yew's new model Confucianism, combining personal and family improvement, moral order and collective will, to somehow explain the success of late-20th-century cities in raucous East Asian democracies like Taiwan and South Korea. In any event, it's hard to make Confucianism into the secret of economic success since non-Japanese East Asian cities declined for 200 years before their recent boom.

Some of Kotkin's other historical examples of the impact of sacredness don't pan out. If Renaissance cynicism undermined the Italian city-states, then the Catholic Counter-Reformation, which revolutionized religious practice there, should have reinvigorated them. But they continued to decline as economic power shifted to the Atlantic world. Soviet cities lacked reverence for sacred places, Kotkin says. But while the Communists trashed traditional religion, they created cults of Stalin and the heroic worker as emotional and all-encompassing as anything in the Counter-Reformation. They even renamed St. Petersburg for Lenin, who got his own shrine in Moscow's Red Square. If Kotkin is right, the prosperous secularized cities of today's Western Europe should be suffering, while today's Islamic cities, many with spectacular mosques and pervasive religiosity, should be world leaders rather than basket cases.

Kotkin explains that many Islamic cities are backward because they lack cosmopolitanism—the openness to other cultures found in many famous cities over the centuries—which he views as a byproduct of commerce. The definitively noncosmopolitan cities of Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany, however, had well-performing autarkic economies to go along with their evil political systems, at least for a while. Causation may run in the other direction, with a cosmopolitan culture encouraging an openness to commerce.

There are numerous factual errors—perhaps inevitable given the scale of Kotkin's project. The Ottomans did not rename Constantinople as Istanbul; the Turkish Republic changed the name (a Turkish corruption of the original) in 1930 as part of Kemal Atatürk's modernization movement. Brooklyn was Manhattan's suburban hinterland from the 1807 invention of the steamboat, not starting with the 1898 municipal merger that created Greater New York. Manhattan's 1902 Flatiron Building was not a "key breakthrough." It wasn't even the tallest building in New York at the time. The Dutch Republic was not addicted to short-term thinking, notwithstanding the aberrational Tulip Mania of 1636-37. The Dutch poured hundreds of billions of dollars (in modern equivalents) into municipal and national canal systems, with a payoff over generations. And Nikita Khrushchev did not boast of surpassing the West as late as 1970; he was deposed in 1964, and silenced thereafter.

Kotkin's discussion of the suburban boom of the second half of the 20th century is more successful. While it is fashionable to denounce suburbia and the spread cities of the Sunbelt as sprawl, Kotkin views them as the latest iteration of the city. With the rise of inexpensive cars and superhighways, lower densities became possible. People could live in a single-family house on a patch of lawn and still get to work. But in praising suburbia, Kotkin mysteriously drops two-thirds of his triad. Commerce is often zoned out, and the suburbs notably lack civic sacred space. Instead, the suburbs offer privatized space, whether megachurches, gated communities, or shopping malls, where the customer is welcomed and others are excluded. This is novel, although it has precedents in pre-modern European cities like the City of London, which were governed by municipal corporations controlled by merchants.

Despite Kotkin's love of suburbia (he is a Los Angeleno), his view is crabbed, reflecting his inability to conceive of urban networks as opposed to single municipalities, whether in ancient Phoenicia or the modern Dallas Metroplex. Here, and in a series of op-ed pieces, he has juxtaposed virtuous 21st-century suburbia with what he considers to be soulless, service-industry-oriented center cities offering culture and coolness, and catering to the young, childless couples, and gays.

Kotkin believes that center cities can't survive without a mix of family types in residence, and without blue collar jobs. Yet this mix is an artifact of the hub-and-spoke infrastructure of the pre-automobile city, where all uses had to be within a short distance of the

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transportation hub. Even in these tighter confines, cities had always spatially separated uses. In the 8th century, Tang Dynasty China's capital, Chang'an, had merchant, government, religious, and aristocratic neighborhoods, and medieval Venice, as Kotkin notes, effectively zoned different industrial uses.

Kotkin's argument is perverse, condemning cool 21st-century downtowns for the very strategy that has made suburbs so successful: market segmentation. Starting in the 19th century, as municipal powers of annexation were limited, city boundaries no longer coincided with metropolitan ones. Suburbs, usually more compact than the old central cities, differentiated themselves from each other through zoning and municipal amenities, and people voted with their feet (which economists more formally call Tiebout voting). Some close-in, relatively dense suburban towns catered to lower middle class workers. Others had large-lot zoning that only executives could afford. And still others attracted large-scale office or retail use.

The gentrification of inner city neighborhoods, far from being an example of moral collapse, turns downtown into one more choice on the lifestyle menu in increasingly polycentric metropolitan areas. The trend goes back almost as far as suburbanization, with possibly the first gentrified neighborhood being New York's Greenwich Village in the 1880s. By now, revived downtowns, with their dense, architecturally rich and cosmopolitan atmosphere, have attracted affluent residents in cities as different as Manchester and Houston. And the process adds value to other worn-out neighborhoods. After 125 years, gentrification in New York is reaching as far as Brooklyn's impoverished, beat-up Bushwick neighborhood. The alternative is to become Detroit, with its miles of vacant lots that used to be housing.

Even if gentrifying neighborhoods become too expensive for middle class residents, the mix of populations and uses is still there on a metropolitan level. Suburbanites can drive in to spend a Saturday night in Cleveland's Warehouse District, a revived entertainment neighborhood; and the salt-of-the-earth blue-collar workers who staff New Jersey's distribution centers can truck their food, office supplies, and electronics into Philadelphia's Rittenhouse Square for yuppies to buy.

While Kotkin correctly observes that new growth is concentrated in the suburbs (refuting Richard Florida's poorly researched argument in *The Rise of the Creative Class* that coolness is the only economic engine), this doesn't demonstrate the failure of inner-city revival. Downtown redevelopment almost has to be upscale, since generic housing, offices, or retail can always be built more cheaply at the metropolitan edge, where vacant land allows the creation of brand-new infrastructure, usually with less regulation. Only people with higher incomes and specialized tastes will pay the added costs of retrofitting older neighborhoods—though inner cities need to deregulate to reduce the suburban cost advantage as much as possible.

Kotkin is as blind to the post-1990 revival of center cities as earlier writers were to the evolution of suburbs, and his trinity of security, commerce, and sacredness is a dour one, suppressing the spark that brings life to urban areas. In this, he is the successor to a long line of nostrum-peddling 20th-century critics. Ebenezer Howard and Lewis Mumford believed that planning could generate self-contained humanistic cities outside the oppressive center. Le Corbusier envisioned towers in parks, and became the most merciless destroyer of cities since Attila the Hun. Jane Jacobs adored polyglot urban areas, but demanded that every block look like her Greenwich Village neighborhood.

"City air makes free," said the medieval Germans, referring to the escape from feudal constraints. Urban writers, too, need to remember that the market happily provides urban choices for different tastes. ♦

Happy Warriors

Three who unmade a revolution.

BY STEVEN F. HAYWARD

There was an arresting tableau at Ronald Reagan's memorial service at the National Cathedral in 2004 that passed largely without comment. Seated together in the same pew were Lady Margaret Thatcher and Mikhail Gorbachev, the man with whom, Thatcher famously told the world, "we can do business."

The President, the Pope, and the Prime Minister
Three Who Changed the World
by John O'Sullivan
Regnery, 448 pp., $27.95

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If, the day after Ronald Reagan's election in 1980, you had offered the prediction that not only would Reagan set us down the road to ending the Cold War, but the final leader of our dangerous foe would pay tribute to Reagan at his passing, your listeners would have looked nervously for men in white coats to intervene. The scene of Gorbachev and Thatcher together saluting Reagan almost demands speculation about Providence, if not divine intervention; only the absence of Pope John Paul II—protocol and ill health prevented his attendance—kept the thought from becoming obvious.

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Bettmann / Corbis / Jim Hubbard

Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, 1985

The story of the end of the Cold War, surely one of the most momentous and consequential in all human history, continues to grow as more details emerge from the archives, and we have yet to grasp it from certain angles. There are shelves of books about the "Big Three" of World War II—Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin—but so far very little has been written directly about the triad of Reagan, Thatcher, and John Paul II, partly because the pope's indirect political role does not fit easily into the conventions of political biography. Here, for the first time, John O'Sullivan pulls together the important threads from all three figures.

He is the ideal person to tell this story, having lived in Washington for much of Reagan's first term in office, serving as an aide and speechwriter to Thatcher, and all the while worshiping in the Roman Catholic Church. It is this last fact—O'Sullivan's own faith—that is decisive in the genius of this book, as he appreciates both the political and theological subtleties of John Paul that are lost on most political writers, as well as the role of faith for both Reagan and Thatcher.

When, in the first 10 pages, O'Sullivan fixes his gaze on then-Cardinal Wojtyla's deft responses to Vatican II and the erosion of Church orthodoxy in the 1960s and '70s (especially on matters of sexual morality), it seems, at first, like a peculiar digression from the main story line of the 1980s. By degrees, though, O'Sullivan makes us appreciate anew John Paul's shrewdness and prudence, qualities that enabled him to conduct himself in Poland in a manner O'Sullivan describes as a "technique of resistance disguised as accommodation." (This acute perception also enables O'Sullivan to swerve away from embracing uncritically the cloak-and-dagger stories beloved of some conservatives, such as that the pope actively collaborated with the CIA to bring down the Polish government.) Beyond this, O'Sullivan believes that "In all three cases—Reagan, Thatcher, and John Paul—it is a spiritual dimension that best explains them and their achievements."

And although Americans know instinctively that Reagan and Thatcher were on the same ideological wavelength, most Americans are not aware of details of the Reagan-Thatcher collaboration (and occasional spats) beyond the Cold War dimension. They complemented each other not merely on ideological grounds, but because "each brought to the partnership qualities the other person lacked that made it work better." Everyone knows of "The Speech," Reagan's famous nationwide address for Barry Goldwater in 1964 that launched Reagan's political career. Few know that Thatcher had her own analogue, a 1968 address to a Conservative party conference entitled "What's Wrong with Politics?" With its attacks on consensus government policy, it was a sharp break from Tory doctrine as it existed at the time.

It signaled Thatcher's arrival as a serious political force in her party. And like Reagan's speech, it proved a lodestar to the future: "Anyone who treated the lecture as a guide to future decisions by a Thatcher government would have been right nine times out

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of ten." O'Sullivan also chronicles Thatcher's domestic policy achievements, which parallel Reagan's very closely, in large part because they were based on the same principles of free markets, lower taxes, deregulation, and privatization.

It was the closeness of their political principles that enabled Thatcher, paradoxically, to speak bluntly and sometimes roughly to Reagan. "Reagan didn't mind," O'Sullivan explains, "and was even amused by her occasional outbursts. One time, when she was thundering disagreement down the phone line from London, he held up the telephone so that the rest of the room could hear her and said, 'Isn't she wonderful?'"

Everyone recalls, too, the attempted shootings of Reagan and the Pope just a few weeks apart, but O'Sullivan reminds us that Thatcher also survived an assassination attempt, the IRA's bombing of the Grand Hotel in Brighton in 1984. "There is an almost cinematic neatness about this series of crimes," O'Sullivan writes. "In *The Omen* or *The Exorcist* they would be readily explained as the forces of Satan seeking to destroy the apostles of hope before they could do too much good."

Along the way, O'Sullivan briskly recalls many familiar scenes, such as Reagan's dramatic summits with Gorbachev, the iterations of the Polish crisis, and the contentiousness over arms control and Central American policy, in most cases including the role and influence of the pope that is missing from most other narratives. O'Sullivan also discusses possible alternative interpretations of some aspects of these familiar moments in the 1980s. Most important is his intuition that John Paul discerned Reagan's sincerity about wanting to abolish nuclear weapons, as well as a regard for Reagan's view that both a military buildup and the Strategic Defense Initiative were morally and politically prudent—a view at odds with most American Catholic bishops.

Most unconventional is O'Sullivan's assessment of the relative legacy of all three figures. Reagan's might seem the most substantial. Until the recent election it seemed plausible (and, perhaps, still does) to see Reagan as the agent of the realignment that made conservatives and the Republican party the governing majority in America. Although Thatcher compelled her Labour opposition to moderate its views (unlike the Democratic party here, with the brief and partial exception of Bill Clinton), her Tory party has been lost in the wilderness ever since she departed the scene. (O'Sullivan refers to the Tory party's "continuing nervous breakdown.")

In the grand scheme of things, these matters are political ephemera. O'Sullivan revels in politics, but keeps his eyes fixed on what Abraham Lincoln called "the only greater institution" against which "the gate of hell shall not prevail." O'Sullivan notes at the end that "the late pope bequeathed to Pope Benedict XVI a Catholic Church that was large, growing fast, becoming more orthodox and possessing an advantage over the other rapidly growing Christian churches in the southern parts of the world . . . That may one day come to look like a greater achievement than his role in the defeat of Communism—and not only in the eyes of God."

The scope of O'Sullivan's narrative does not, of course, allow for an extrapolation to the present circumstances of the West's clash with terrorism and radical Islam. But the central movement of the three figures in view, who went rapidly from being "too sharp, clear, and definite in an age of increasingly fluid identities and sophisticated doubts" to being "just what the doctor ordered to cure malaise," should encourage us that their qualities may reassert themselves at the very moment when hopes for such virtues seem forlorn. ♦

Going Nuclear

One cure for global climate change may surprise you.

BY WILLIAM TUCKER

James Lovelock is a strange duck. A British biologist who has made some extraordinary discoveries, such as the presence of chlorofluorocarbons in the Antarctic atmosphere, he is also the originator of the "Gaia hypothesis," the theory that the Earth is actually a living organism.

On the surface, the Gaia hypothesis seems little more than a return to paganism. As a scientific theory it offers only one intriguing proposition: The neo-Darwinistic suggestion that species which improve the environment for other species have a stronger chance of survival. Richard Dawkins and the disciples of the selfish gene have savaged Lovelock in debate over the last decade, but the idea does have some interesting possibilities. Building symbiotic relationships has survival value. An individual that can cooperate with other individuals probably does better in the long run, be it a species or a civilization.

The Revenge of Gaia
Earth's Climate Crisis and the Fate of Humanity
by James Lovelock
Basic, 176 pp., $25

What Dawkins is arguing against, of course, is the old notion that plants and animals can be purely altruistic. But there's an intriguing core to Lovelock's mythology that bears consideration.

All this has been argued in other forums, however. In *The Revenge of Gaia*, Lovelock is playing the Delphic oracle. He has access to Gaia while others don't, and is bringing back the word from the

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mountaintop. The message these days is simple: "Boy, is she mad!" Gaia has had it up to here with humanity and its polluting ways. In particular, global warming threatens to send temperatures off the charts and mankind to the brink of extinction. Those who survive may be living in caves.

All this would just be standard Al Gore agitprop, except for one thing. At 87, Lovelock has been around the block more than a few times and is not willing to entertain what he calls the "romantic idealism" of contemporary environmentalism. *The Revenge of Gaia* is foursquare for nuclear power and contemptuously dismissive of windmills, solar collectors, "renewables," and all the other "alternate-energy" strategies. Al Gore beware.

Here, for example, is Lovelock on the supposedly intractable problem of nuclear waste:

> An outstanding advantage of nuclear over fossil fuel energy is how easy it is to deal with the waste it produces. Burning fossil fuels produces 27,000 millon tons of carbon dioxide yearly, enough . . . to make, if solidified, a mountain nearly one mile high and with a base twelve miles in circumference. The same quantity of energy produced from nuclear fission reactions would generate two million times less waste, and it would occupy a sixteen-metre cube. . . . I have offered in public to accept all of the high-level waste produced in a year from a nuclear power station for deposit on my small plot of land; it would occupy a space about a cubic metre in size and fit safely in a concrete pit, and I would use the heat from its decaying radioactive elements to heat my home. It would be a waste not to use it.

By contrast, here is his assessment of wind energy:

> To supply the UK's present electricity needs would require 276,000 wind generators, about three per square mile, if national parks, urban, suburban and industrial areas are excluded. . . . [T]he intermittency of wind means that, at best, energy is available from wind turbines only 25 percent of the time. During the remaining 75 percent, electricity has to be made in standby fossil fuel power stations; worse still, the power stations have to be kept idling when wind energy is available. . . . The most recent report from Germany put wind energy as available only 16 percent of the time.

But nothing arouses his wrath—or is it the wrath of Gaia?—as does "biofuels," producing fuels from crops.

> Even if these natural products were used only for transport, to fuel our cars, trucks, trains, ships and aircraft, it would require us to burn every year about two to three gigatons of carbon as bio fuel. . . . Compare this quantity with our yearly food consumption of about half a gigaton. To grow this much already uses more of the Earth's land surface than may be safe. We would need the land area of several earths just to grow the bio fuel. . . . We have already taken more than half of the productive land to grow food and raw material for ourselves. How can we expect Gaia to manage the Earth if we try to take the rest of the land for fuel production?

Lovelock is being branded as a curmudgeon whose arguments are self-serving. (In fact, he admits, his opposition to wind power went into high gear when a neighbor signed a contract to install one of those 40-story monstrosities on land just next to his farm in West Devon.) But Lovelock is hitting at environmentalism's soft underbelly. Many an urban romantic may fool himself that solar and renewables are going to be able to do the job, but Lovelock is not taking the bait.

> I believe nuclear power is the only source of energy that will satisfy our demands and yet not be a hazard to Gaia and interfere with its capacity to sustain a comfortable climate and atmospheric composition.

Published last year in Great Britain, *The Revenge of Gaia* has already had a significant impact on the energy debate there. It apparently played a part in Prime Minister Tony Blair's recent endorsement of nuclear power before the G-8 Summit. (As soon as Blair announced his support for nuclear, the British Conservative party stupidly announced it would have to be against it.) As the nuclear option becomes more of a reality in this country, a fierce debate over its acceptability has already emerged in the environmental community. As more than a dozen utilities prepare to submit proposals for new reactors to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Lovelock's book could play a similar role here. ♦

Poor Little Buttercup

The Hollywood version of a CIA wise man.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

In *The In-Laws*, the uproarious 1979 comedy, dentist Alan Arkin spots a photograph of John F. Kennedy on the office wall of rogue CIA agent Peter Falk with a handwritten message: "To Vince: At least we tried. Best, Jack."

"What did that inscription mean?" Arkin asks.

"The Bay of Pigs," says Falk. "That referred to the Bay of Pigs."

"You were involved in the Bay of Pigs?" says Arkin.

"Involved?" says Falk. "That was my idea!"

"The Bay of Pigs," Arkin replies.

"You win some, you lose some," shrugs Falk.

Peter Falk's character is a complete lunatic—he claims to have seen tse-tse flies the size of eagles carrying Guatemalan babies off to their doom in their beaks—but at least he is decent company. That's more than you can say for Edward Wilson, Matt Damon's charac-

John Podhoretz, a columnist for the New York Post, *is* THE WEEKLY STANDARD*'s movie critic.*

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ter in *The Good Shepherd*. Wilson, too, is credited in this movie with the Bay of Pigs scheme. And in another eerie parallel with *The In-Laws*, Wilson lets loose a bunch of locusts on the Guatemalan tobacco crop (although, unlike the tse-tse flies in *The In-Laws*, the locusts in *The Good Shepherd* are *not* "protected against pilferage under the provisions of the Guacamole Act of 1917").

The screenwriter of *The Good Shepherd*, Eric Roth, had an idea. His idea was that the CIA's obsession with secrecy is the result of the repressions visited upon impressionable young White Anglo Saxon Protestants like Wilson, whom we follow from his college days in the late '30s until the early 1960s.

Universal Pictures / Andrew Schwartz

Angelina Jolie, Matt Damon

Like all WASPs, according to Roth, Wilson has no idea what real fun is. He spends his entire life scowling. Even when he's dressed in drag as a Yale student in 1939 singing "Poor Little Buttercup" with the Whiffenpoofs, he looks like he swallowed a lemon. He spends his free time putting miniature boats inside bottles instead of romping in the sack with his wife, who happens to be Angelina Jolie.

Not that he goes another way or anything. When he joins a secret society at Yale, he doesn't enjoy rolling around in the mud naked with his fellow Skull and Bones guys, either. He just doesn't want to roll in the hay with his wife—a wife who looks and sounds just like Angelina Jolie. Have you ever *seen* Angelina Jolie? That WASP repression is certainly a powerful force.

Wilson is recruited out of Yale to join the fledgling Office of Strategic Services. This offer comes at a very good time, because he has just gotten married to Angelina Jolie and if he stayed he might have to share a bed with her, and who could possibly want *that*? He goes abroad for the entirety of World War II, and when he returns home to Washington he has a five year-old son who doesn't know him and is afraid of him, and he has a new intelligence agency to start.

That new intelligence agency is entirely unnecessary, as we learn later when Wilson has a Soviet defector tortured and drugged with truth serum. Unable to speak falsehoods, the defector informs Wilson that the Soviets pose no threat, that nothing works inside the Soviet Union, and that the only reason for the Cold War is the enrichment of the military-industrial complex. This revelation of the Soviet Union's harmlessness occurs, by the way, at some point in the 1950s—you know, around the time the Soviets exploded a nuclear device and crushed the Hungarian rebellion and helped Fidel Castro to take over an island 90 miles off America's shore.

The Good Shepherd
Directed by Robert De Niro

You know those WASPs; they can't show any love to Angelina Jolie, but give them a little glimpse of a pointless but expensive weapons system and they get all weak in the knees. And they may be completely inexpressive, but if they meet a Jew you can be sure they're going to say something anti-Semitic. Wilson goes to Miami to see a Jewish gangster who isn't named Meyer Lansky but might as well be. He may be a crook, but at least he worries about his grandchildren getting a sunburn, which is more than you can say for Wilson and his son. He asks Wilson why he behaves the way he does, and Wilson replies, "It's our country, and the rest of you are visiting."

The Good Shepherd isn't exactly a bad movie. It's extremely well acted, as you might expect from a film directed by Robert De Niro. And despite its dogmatically leftist assault on the idea that the United States has ever had anything to defend itself from, it does manage to convey the head-spinning complexities of a life devoted to spying and counter-spying and counter-counter-spying. It holds your attention for more than two-and-a-half hours, and that's saying something.

But it's undone by its central premise. The character of Edward Wilson is based on James Angleton, the CIA counterintelligence chief. But whatever Angleton may have been—

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and I incline toward the view that he became so haunted by the "wilderness of mirrors" in which he found himself trapped that he ended up as something perilously close to a paranoid schizophrenic—he certainly wasn't a dullard. He was a brilliant man who was both gifted and cursed by a chess player's mind capable of perceiving a million different permutations resulting from any single action. If he had been colorless and dull and easily gulled, like Edward Wilson, he wouldn't have turned the CIA upside down in the 1960s in pursuit of a high-ranking Soviet agent who almost certainly never existed—and he wouldn't have become an object of fascination for CIA-obsessed writers on both the right and left for many decades.

The captivating and haunting mystery of James Angleton goes unexplored in the portrait of Edward Wilson offered by Eric Roth and Robert De Niro. He's simply a quiet nightmare vision of the WASP ascendancy as imagined by an Oscar-winning Jewish screenwriter and an Oscar-winning Italian-American actor-director.

The movie ends with Wilson walking down a lonely corridor to the strains of "Poor Little Buttercup." It would have been better if it had ended with a voiceover of Peter Falk in *The In-Laws* telling a New York cabbie about the glories of the CIA: "Are you interested in joining? The benefits are fantastic. The trick is not to get killed. That's the key to the benefit program." ♦

Books in Brief

***The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey*, by Candice Millard (Doubleday, 432 pp., $26).** The Theodore Roosevelt history remembers is the effervescent, tough-talking warrior who never walked away from a struggle, regardless of circumstances. While this is an accurate portrayal of TR, there was one particular instance when he stared at the face of death, and contemplated suicide.

In this seldom-revisited chapter of Roosevelt's life, during his daring scientific expedition to the Amazon jungles, following his failed attempt at a third term in 1912, Roosevelt was overtly frustrated, fatigued, and sick beyond comprehension. He had become horribly ill from malnutrition, a severely infected leg, and merciless jungle circumstances. This is an altogether different Roosevelt, anything but the paragon of vigor.

Candice Millard paints a thorough, gripping portrait of Roosevelt and his journey to South America. *The River of Doubt* is named for the uncharted Amazon tributary that spelled near-doom for the former president and his supporting cast of 20 men. Millard is worth reading for her contribution to the shelf of Roosevelt books, but mainly for her portrayal of TR at his most vulnerable, yet in many ways at his best—victorious even in the face of death.

She depicts his decision to travel to South America as a coping mechanism. TR could not get past his defeat at the polls, and his aim was to embark on a journey that would enliven his circumstances. He also wanted to add to his lengthy list of travels in search of scientific and historic achievement. Roosevelt had always been known as someone who moved incessantly, always seeking "still greater tests . . . experiences that came to shape his personality and inform his most impressive achievements," and while he believed an excursion to the Brazilian jungle would be anything but strenuous ("uneventful"), those who knew him well understood he would find some way to make this particular journey interesting.

Once in South America, TR's Brazilian guide promised him an opportunity to venture onto a dangerous, unsurveyed river. Roosevelt jumped at the chance without knowing that the Rio Duvida was not only unexplored, but also demanding and unforgiving—its final destination, a mystery.

As the weeks passed, Roosevelt and his men soon realized they were in a difficult race against time and the elements. But TR was willing, and probably eager, to face impregnable odds, as he readily admitted that he had already "lived and enjoyed as much of life . . . and if it is necessary for me to leave my bones [there], I am quite ready to do so." Grueling tropical conditions consisted of intense humidity and heat, torrential rains, and a river made up of steep cascades and waterfalls that are not easily navigated. Eventually, the expedition took its toll: One man drowned, one was murdered, and the remaining men were left to fend for themselves while rationing food and trapping obscure wild animals to eat.

Most caught malaria, dysentery, or some enervating parasite. And the terrain was horrible: Whenever the men approached waterfalls they could not navigate, they were compelled to carry their cargo down steep slopes, portaging through the jungle, always at the risk of being attacked by the invisible indigenes they never saw, but always seemed to hear, or animals threatening to attack.

Roosevelt suffered most, succumbing to malaria, a persistent fever, and other ailments, and nearly died more than once. This is a sobering account of TR not only at his most inspiring and courageous, but also near the end of his tether. *The River of Doubt* is a masterful description of personal determination and the will to live despite the worst possible odds. Readers get a glimpse not only of how difficult surviving the Amazon can be, but also of the psychology of man's survival, especially when he is driven to a point of utter exhaustion and frustration, with no hope in sight. Yet, as Millard points out, even at his most vulnerable, Theodore Roosevelt embodied strength: "Each time he encountered an obstacle, he responded with more vigor, more energy, more raw determination. Each time he faced personal tragedy or weakness, he found his strength."

—Walter S. Montano

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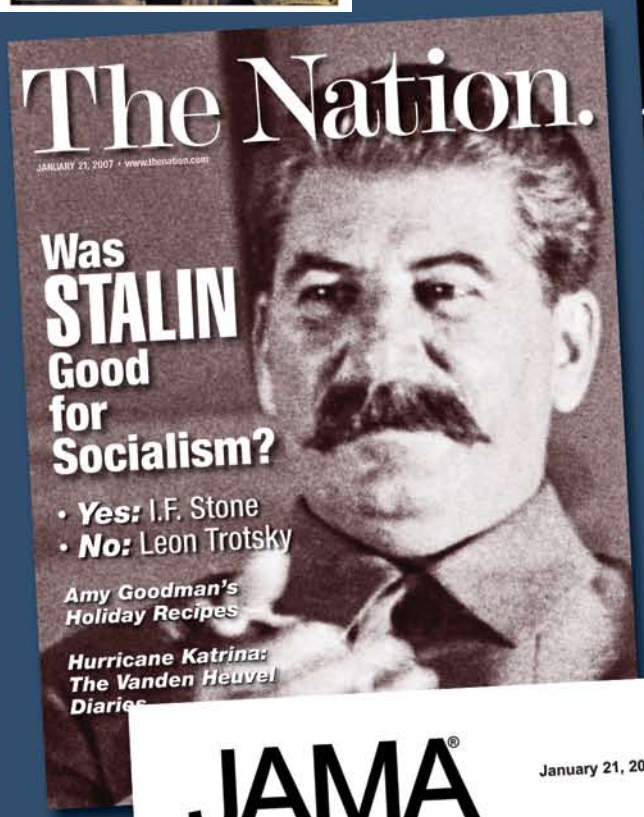
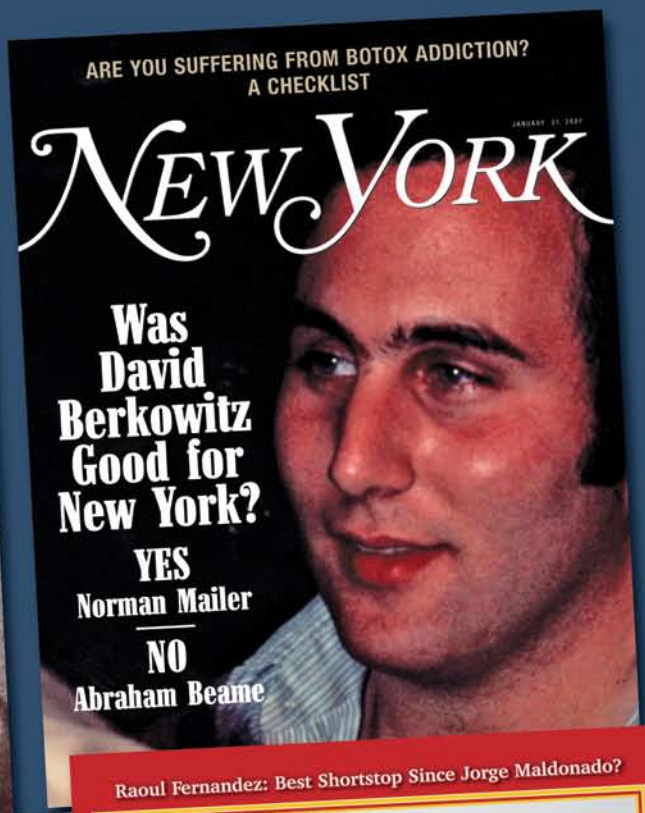
Parody

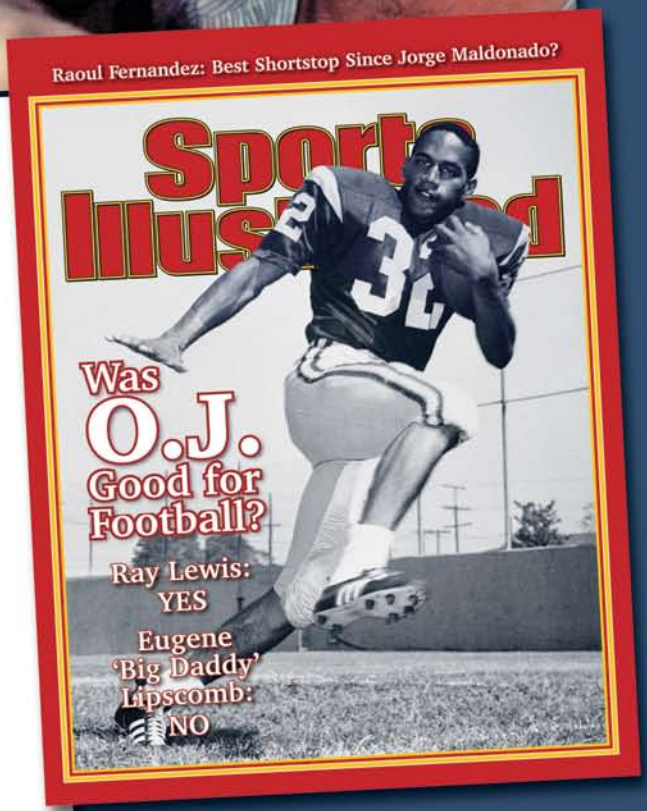
Was Castro Good for Cuba?

Yes—Ignacio Ramonet
No—Carlos Alberto Montaner

–Foreign Policy, *January/February 2007*







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